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A C O N C I S E  
H I S T O R Y  
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P H I L O S O P H Y  
A N D  
P H I L O S O P H E R S.

By M. FORMEY, M.D.S.E.

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*Apparent rari nantes in gurgite vasto. VIRGIL.*

G L A S G O W:

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T O  
The DIRECTORS of the ACADEMY of BERLIN.

GENTLEMEN,

**T**HE writers of dedications should, in my opinion, use the same precaution with those who invite company to an entertainment; for there is nothing more improper than to place at the same table persons who are wholly strangers to each other, or of different inclinations or education. In the same manner nothing can be more ill judged than to dedicate a book to those who have no knowledge or interest in its subject. I shall not be reproached upon the present occasion with such an error, since I can present the history of philosophy to none who understand the subject better, or who are even better philosophers. Your names, gentlemen, which are as well known as those of the sciences themselves, at once save me the trouble of proving what I advance, and prevent me from falling into a strain of compliment too common in ordinary dedications. I only ask, therefor, that my present silence may be considered, not as a mark of my inattention to your merits, but as an instance of the greatness of my esteem. I have for several years, gentlemen, conducted my labours under your inspection, and I flatter myself that you will not refuse me the justice due, if not to the felicity, at least to the assiduity, of

my endeavours. This assiduity, joined to a right intention, is all the merit I can presume to claim.

HAVING been long a stranger to indolence, industry is now become habitual to me. I have learned to find time for peculiar studies in the intervals of my more immediate employments, and to aim at public good under the acutest pressures of private infirmities. I have ever coveted the approbation of the wise and good, with as much earnestness as I have despised the arrows of calumny or the objections of ignorance. I have pursued what appears to me to be right, and while I have strength to proceed, no worldly consideration shall hinder my progress; and so long as I think my publications either benefit society, or amuse the learned, I shall still continue to offer them. Your encouragement, gentlemen, will be one great motive to my perseverance; but, should you add your friendship to the favour, my wishes would be complete: and, in aspiring to this honour, permit me to assure you that I am with the most inviolable attachment,

GENTLEMEN,

*Your most humble,*

*And obedient servant,*

BERLIN,  
Jan. 24, 1760

FORMEY.

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## INTRODUCTION.

**I**T may be said, with great justice, that there is only one science in nature, and that is PHILOSOPHY. All the rest, whatever names they may have obtained, cannot properly be called sciences, but as they are so many parts tending to illustrate that great object of human enquiry. In fact, philosophy is the science which teaches the improvement of human reason; it tends to give a clear and solid explication of all things that exist, or of all that may have even a possible existence. Jurisprudence, physic, astronomy, and such like, are only peculiar branches of this universal art, and as far as they extend contribute to its formation. Thus all our knowledge, as well of the existence of things themselves, as of the reasons of their mutual influence upon each other, ranges itself under this master-science; philosophy guides the research, and teaches to enjoy the discovery.

FROM that curiosity which is almost innate in man, and the faculty of reasoning which belongs particularly to him, we are induced to look upon philosophy as ancient as the world itself. The first time a man began to desire to know the reason of any appearance, he then commenced his search after philosophy; and as soon as he was able to explain the appearance under consideration, he then

## 6. INTRODUCTION.

actually became a philosopher. Thus philosophy, considered in its most extensive sense, is only a knowledge of all the phenomena of nature, with the most probable explanations of their causes, effects, and possibilities of production. The first man was a philosopher as far as his powers extended. As his successors were possessed of his knowledge, and joined also that of their own, philosophy grew greater, and men wiser, by accumulated discovery.

HAD the road to truth been the only one which was followed, and had men from generation to generation gone forward in it without deviation, the history of philosophy would have been no other than that of truth itself. This science would then have offered only the purest lights to the understanding, and guided both speculation and practice with unerring certainty. Had this been the case, we should have long since arrived at that precision which is the object of our researches, and have upon every subject all the certainty which it was capable of affording. Were philosophy thus conducted, it would have been both our happiness and glory to have embarked in the pursuit: it would then have been a solid science drawn from the purest sources of reason and experience, an assemblage of self-evident principles, and of just conclusions: it would have taught man to know not only all objects around him, but that more difficult object, himself: it would have led him from the works of nature to their great creator; have widened the bounds of

his happiness here, and assisted him in the means of deserving it hereafter. Philosophy thus conducted would begin by perfecting the human understanding, shewing what was necessary to be done in order to acquire distinct ideas, to form sound judgments, and to give reason all its force. Having thus formed the mind for the right observation of things, it would then lead it on to the consideration of the world, and of the analogy there is between the parts of this great globe. From thence it might be led on to consider the cause of all this apparent beauty, and by an obvious gradation mount to the great author and cause of all. Then, turning man to the consideration of himself, it would shew him that happiness was the only end of all his actions, and that this happiness could only flow from the author of his existence, and that to obtain it, all his actions should tend to resemble as much as possible those of the universally beneficent father of all things. The rectitude, that has guided the architect of universal beauty, would then influence the actions of man; and upon examining the relation between different actions, he would find that some tended to produce order, and others to introduce confusion. He would, therefor, adhere to the first, and avoid the latter: he would thus be taught to love virtue, and to detest vice. From these principles it would have been easy for him to settle the bounds of his duty either in a civil or political capacity, either as a citizen of his native



## 8 INTRODUCTION.

realm or of the world. In a word, philosophy thus cultivated would have dissipated doubt, and remedied every necessity except those which have arisen from human infirmity, and which can be rectified only by a superior power. Whoever should be thus possessed of all the lights requisite to conduct him, and should act according to those lights, would be at once the greatest of philosophers and the happiest of men.

THIS is an inviting picture, but where is the original from whence it was taken? Is this philosophy, such as we have now described it, a phantom alone, a thing impossible and contradictory? By no means! This only is philosophy, if we would adhere to the strict meaning of the term. But can we apply this charming portrait to the philosophy of former ages, or even of our own? The history of true philosophy is the history of truth and of virtue; but how different is that which has long assumed the name! Error and passion hold the chief place in our philosophical researches. One series of philosophers exceeds their predecessors only in altercation and vanity, and the world by growing older only serves to produce new extravagancies both in practice and speculation. This might be apt to turn us from the study of its history, which thus obviously appears fraught with opinions and absurdities that only deserve to be forgotten. It might excite our despair of succeeding in a pursuit where so many of

## INTRODUCTION. 9

the greatest men have failed, and where ages have toiled without success.

THIS in some measure has its weight, but we should not make precipitant decisions. I acknowledge that a life wholly taken up in examining the absurdities of former philosophy, in tracing opinions never perhaps well understood even by their authors, and now almost wholly forgotten, would be very ill employed, and the fruit would never repay the labourer's industry. But yet we shall find some cause to applaud those ingenious men who have laboured in this career; probably by examining the errors of others they have learned to rectify their own. They have given the republic of letters a most agreeable entertainment, which, if it does not correct duty, will at least lend innocent employment. This part of learning is at once the most fertile and amusing; and they who have succeeded in it richly deserve the praises which they have received. How highly, for instance, does father Beaufobre deserve our applause in his history of manicheism, in which he has fathomed the recesses of ancient heresy, with so much judgment, and shewn their opinions to be only the exploded doctrines of former philosophers oddly adapted to christianity. This plan has been more extensively filled up, and with still greater success, by the illustrious Mr. Brucker, whose critical history of philosophy from its original to the present time, in five large

volumes quarto, in Latin, appears to be one of those works which will do most honour to this age, and from which posterity will derive the most real advantages. When, therefor, I advanced that a life taken up wholly in this study appeared to me ill employed, it was only levelled at those whose professions led them to some particular objects. It would be imprudent, for instance, in a physician or a divine to spend all his time in this entrance to study, and to consume those efforts at the portals of literature which should be employed in forcing into its recesses. No man, however, who aims at the character of a scholar, should be entirely ignorant of this subject; but then it will be sufficient for him to know it, as he does the other parts of history, in a cursory manner; he should become acquainted with the most striking features, but leave details to the historian by profession. If we are for retaining all parts of literature in equal perfection in our minds, we must ask for a life much longer than is allowed to humanity. All we have to do is to pass through those avenues that lead to science, to know the nature of the entrance, but by no means to make it our abode.

A GOOD history of philosophy will therefor serve to prepare us for more particular study, and often prevent our efforts from treading a beaten path yet mistaking it for a new one. Mr. Brucker's history being too voluminous for such as undertake the sub-

ject merely as a preparative to other parts of learning, and his abridgement of it being either written in Latin or German, one was still necessary for more general use. It is well known that books written in the German language seldom travel beyond the limits of their native country. The work therefor, which I now offer the public, will not, I hope, be thought superfluous, since it is designed for those who understand neither of the former languages.

I FLATTER myself that such an abridgement of the history of philosophy will not be a disagreeable present to the public, since it is neither consistent with the time nor inclinations of the greatest number to enter more minutely into a subject of this nature. All they desire is to be possessed of a miniature picture of this extensive part of learning, which may be at once portable and convenient, which may at once give the order of the facts and their mutual relations. It would ill become me to assert that I have answered this intention in the following little work. All that I can assure the public is, that I have laboured with all the diligence in my power to bring it as near perfection as the nature of the work would permit. I must also observe that I have been greatly assisted by six tables made for assisting the memory, from the large work of Mr. Brucker, which contain with great precision all the more important facts that ought to enter into an abridgement of this nature. In the course of



this work I have added such explanations, corrections, and remarks upon the above work, as might tend either to embellish the subject or correct the facts. By these assistances I flatter myself with having performed an useful and necessary undertaking, and with having been in some measure instrumental in promoting the public good.

A CONCISE  
HISTORY  
OF  
PHILOSOPHY.

**T**HIS history comprizes the life and doctrines of such philosophers as have had reputation in the world. Although an account of the actions of philosophers, properly speaking, does not belong to a history of their opinions; yet it is both conformable to custom, and to reason, to give such an account. It is at least as interesting, if not more so, to know how a philosopher lived, as it is to trace the barren annals of princes, who deserve to be forgotten. Add to this, that the doctrines of the philosophers are often connected with the circumstances of their lives, or the place of their birth; it is curious to know, how far their opinions were capable of influencing themselves, how far their lectures were aided by their example. All that is requisite in the historian is, judgment in his choice of such facts as are interesting, and to proportion their number to the extent of his plan; as an abridgement differs in this respect from a complete history, and, indeed, seems the more difficult

undertaking. It would have been very easy to encrease the size of a work of this kind, but it is not so easy to contract it; particularly to contract it so that it will contain neither more nor less than is requisite to give use and uniformity to the whole.

THE History of Philosophy may be divided into three great periods.

I. FROM the creation of the world to the foundation of Rome.

II. FROM the foundation of Rome to the revival of learning, after the taking of Constantinople.

III. FROM the revival of learning to the present time.

## B O O K I.

*Containing the HISTORY of PHILOSOPHY, from  
the Creation of the World to the Foundation  
of ROME.*

THIS first period may be divided into two parts;  
the first comprehending the time before the de-  
luge; and the second from the deluge to the  
foundation of Rome.

## S E C T I O N I.

*The HISTORY of PHILOSOPHY before the Deluge.*

IT would be a superfluous undertaking to enlarge upon this part of philosophical history, even in the most extensive works of this nature. We have, on this subject, no other guide than the holy scriptures; and we need only read that attentively to form a judgment of the philosophical attainments of the first inhabitants of this our globe. Man came from the hands of his Creator endowed, not only with an intelligent soul, but impressed also with a sense of his own obligations to the Supreme Being. He received, in a particular manner, the gift of speech, without which, being inferior to other ani-



mals, he must have lived in want, solitude and insecurity. In process of time, the limits of the mind were extended; and the first language of mankind, of which we are now ignorant, increased in proportion as the men who spoke it became acquainted with a greater variety of the objects around them. This is all we can say concerning the state of mankind before that period in which they were overwhelmed. It is probable that the long life of the first patriarchs gave them an opportunity of making many observations, and of practising several inventions; but of these no vestiges now remain. All that can be now said of their acquirements is either the product of conjecture, or barefaced imposition.

ADAM, as some assure us, was possessed of an innate philosophy, as he maintained a dispute with the serpent. But where is this dispute to be found? And what is still more unfortunate for their system, how came he at length to be overpersuaded, and to transgress the positive injunctions of his Creator, by sophisms so gross as those by which, we are told, he was conquered? But again it will be said, that he gave names to every animal, which he could not have done without knowing them intimately. This observation, however, takes its rise from a false principle, as it implies, that the names lead us to the essences of things. But nothing will abate the pertinacity of those who are willing to go wrong; they have asserted, that the primitive language was *essen-*

tial, and that every word it contained, at once gave the attributes and the essence of the object is referred to. But we have nothing of all this in that only source from whence we derive our knowledge of Adam himself. It seems more natural and simple to affirm, that as he was surrounded with animals which he had every day an opportunity of seeing, he gave them names at pleasure, by which he knew them again; as we now find men in such circumstances usually do.

CAIN was a wicked man; and of that we are assured; but are we from hence, as some would have us, led to consider him as the first father of Epicurean Philosophy? By no means. When did he teach it? Who were his disciples? These are questions it is impossible to resolve.

SETH applied himself to astronomy. This we are told, and yet perhaps with as little foundation. There are only the pretended pillars of Seth to support the assertion; pillars which, probably, as little existed as the inscriptions with which they were said to be engraved.

JUBAL, Tubal Cain, &c. are said to have made discoveries in chymistry, metalurgy, and music; and when we have quoted the texts where this is asserted we have nothing more to say.

ENOCH has left a collection of oracles. The book, which goes under his name, is one of the most barefaced forgeries; but, though it were not, how is it connected with philosophy? This must suffice u.

pon a subject which has been treated at length only by enthusiasts, or those who perhaps wished to deceive.

## S E C T I O N II.

*The HISTORY of PHILOSOPHY from the Deluge to the Foundation of ROME.*

In this second period is comprized, I. The Philosophy of the Barbarians. II. That of the Greeks.

## C H A P. I.

*Of the PHILOSOPHY of the BARBARIANS.*

THE Greeks branded all other nations but their own with the name of Barbarians. The etymology of the word is uncertain; it seems however as if it referred to the rusticity of the language of those nations: an imputation partly just, and partly founded on prejudice; for every foreign language appears harsh and disagreeable to him who does not understand it. But whatever might be the original signification of the word, the Greeks came at last to apply it in the same sense as we do the word *savage*. They supposed that however had the misfortune to be born out of Greece, was for that very reason buried in ignorance and stupidity, incapable of rising to mental attainments, and ut-

terly excluded from all excellence in that pursuit. They, therefor, would not allow the Barbarians the slightest tincture of philosophy.

HOWEVER, they were in this respect, as we shall see, greatly mistaken. The Barbarians understood philosophy, although greatly obscured by their method of treating it. Their philosophy principally consisted in traditions transmitted from father to son. All reasonings, especially such as depended upon a chain of propositions, made no part of their acquisitions. Add to this: it is no easy matter to separate the theological from the philosophical attainments of these rude people, who were as yet only beginning to reason. Their doctrines were a gross assemblage of altered facts, united with false opinions, the whole obscured by extravagant allegories, hard to be understood even among themselves, but at present utterly unintelligible.

We may range the philosophy of the Barbarians under four heads, namely:

1. THE Philosophy of the East.
2. THAT of the South.
3. THAT of the West.
4. THAT of the North.

ARTICLE I. *Of the EASTERN PHILOSOPHY.*

**I**MMEDIATELY after the deluge, Noah is the first who attracts our notice, of whom however we can say nothing respecting his philosophy, more than we have already said of the antedeluvian



patriarchs. The construction of the ark, and the degree of knowlege which such a work required in its execution, cannot be attributed to Noah, but to the superintendence of the Eternal Geometer. It was the same great assistant who collected all the animals which entered into the ark, and the provisions requisite to support them during their continuance there. Whatever else is said concerning the philosophy of the Preserver of the human race, and in particular of his knowlege in chymistry, is a mere fiction. The seven famous precepts which go under his name are impostures of the same kind.

THE posterity of Noah multiplied, peopled the world, and from hence arose those states and empires in which philosophy first had its origin. Among these, in the oriental parts of the world, we may reckon, 1. The Hebrews, 2. The Chaldeans, 3. The Persians, 4. The Indians, 5. The Arabians, and 6. The Phœnicians.

#### § 1. *The* HEBREWS.

THEY derive their original from Shem, the eldest son of Noah. This patriarch passes among some for a great astronomer, but without proof. His brother Ham also has been reproached with having been a magician; but, probably, the one deserves the reproach as little as the other the applause attending their supposed abilities.

ABRAHAM holds upon the same pretensions a distinguished rank among the learned men of his time.

It is said that he taught the Egyptians arithmetic, astronomy, and the Chaldean sciences, which consisted chiefly in divination. The Jews are inexhaustible in fables of this nature; but to us less interested in his fame, Abraham is only known by his faith and by his virtues.

JACOB is said to have been a great naturalist, and those who doubt it are referred to the expedient by which he procured the lambs to be mottled. But whether this was a secret he found by experience, or whether he had it from revelation, is a matter that still remains in dispute; but in either case his knowledge was no way extraordinary.

JOSEPH has got the reputation of a great politician, a man profoundly versed in œconomy, and an interpreter of dreams; but it still remains undecided, what share the divine Spirit, who still conducted and supported him, had in these his predictions. Nor has his name been confounded with that of Hermes with less impropriety. The person, whoever he was that bore this name, must have been prior to Joseph numbers of years, as he passes for having been the author of the Egyptian learning; and it is very evident that their learning was in a most flourishing condition, when Joseph was called to the administration of the kingdom, which is the best proof of its antiquity.

It was from this source that Moses derived that knowledge which rendered him one of the most learned men of his age. This assertion is well supported;

for it is confirmed by scripture. But though we are authorized thus far, it will be temerity to enter into a detail of the different sciences which Moses was said to possess. As a legislator, he is only to be considered as a man inspired by God himself with such laws as were calculated to improve the happiness of his favoured people. His Cosmogony, or history of the creation of the world, does not shew him to have derived his knowledge from any other source than that of immediate revelation. The manner of his reducing the golden calf into powder may perhaps be ascribed to the same source; and, in short, though we must allow him to have been one of the wisest and greatest men of antiquity; yet we are unable to tell in what his principal merit as a philosopher consisted, because we have no adequate idea of the philosophy of his age.

SOLOMON would be a most accomplished philosopher, if, to the forced explanation of some scriptural passages concerning him, we should add the fabulous traditions, which give the most exalted idea of his abilities. Those works which he published upon natural history are lost; and as to those enigmas which he explained, we only find him possessed of the same abilities which were common to cotemporary princes. The decrees which he passed in judgment only shew a person of good sense; and lastly, his Proverbs may be considered as excellent maxims in morality. This alone renders him very respectable; but we should still consider, that God,

from whom he had asked wisdom, was the immediate source of his talents; and therefor the title of philosopher agrees with him but very imperfectly, as his knowledge was properly not of his own acquiring. But with regard to those mysteries, which he is said to be the author of, and those books tending to propagate such opinions, they are all falsehoods introduced by imposture, and received by credulity.

DANIEL has a very exalted character; but it is to the Divine Spirit and not to philosophy, that he is indebted for his reputation.

JOB lived in an age of which it is difficult to fix the date; and even, if this were effected, it would still be necessary to prove, that he was the author of the book that bears his name. This book, it must be acknowledged, contains many strictures, as well logical, as appertaining to natural history. But these too must be placed rather to the account of inspiration, than of philosophy.

THUS, to judge with precision of the philosophy of the Hebrews, we must have recourse to the works of their doctors, and their other classic books. By examining these, we shall find that, properly speaking, they had no philosophers; but that their wisdom was an assemblage of opinions, partly derived from revelation obscured by traditions, and partly from experience. The most distinguished among their literati turned their talents to the business of legislation and political œconomy, without paying



any attention to those subjects which are more particularly the object of a philosopher's enquiry.

§ 2. *Of the* CHALDEANS.

THE Assyrians are called by this name. Their philosophy is obscure and unsatisfactory, as it goes back into the remotest antiquity, and must consequently be derived from the most uncertain sources. It requires very great precaution not to confound the real opinions of ancient times with fictions which were produced in succeeding ages. Nothing is so embarrassing in this respect as that continual mixture of opinions taken from theology with those of philosophy. The religion of this people was only a monstrous assemblage of the most irrational superstitions, and the most profound idolatry. The priests imposed upon the people by every art that imposture could suggest. They wrought their pupils into a belief of divinations, auguries, enchantments, interpretation of dreams, and coloured these with ceremonies equally licentious and trifling. If there were any truths concealed under this vail of falsehood, it is impossible to discover them at this time: such an attempt would be even more ridiculous than the follies we have been describing. All we know for certain is, that their impostures were obnoxious to government, since in the beginning of the Roman monarchy, the Chaldean arts were proscribed as impious and delusive.

THE method, in which the Chaldean philosophy

was delivered, was *traditional*, and *secret*. It was *traditional*, inasmuch as the dogmas of it were delivered from the fathers to their children, and that the latter were obliged to receive them without the least examination, and with the most implicit obedience. It was *secret*, as none were admitted to a complete knowledge of its doctrines, and an initiation into its mysteries, but such as were chosen for this purpose, whose discretion could be confided in. This secret, whatever it was, was esteemed as their real philosophy, since to the vulgar they only committed a vague set of notions; words were all that were given them, but the things themselves were reserved for the initiated.

NOTWITHSTANDING the obscurity of the Chaldean philosophy, it has been greatly celebrated by all antiquity, and its followers have been divided into many sects, of which we now only know the names: such as the Hipparenians, the Babylonians, the Orchenians, the Borsippians, etc.

AT the head of the illustrious names which this philosophy has furnished, we find that of Zoroaster. However, it is no easy matter to disentangle what concerns him from the actions of several others who bore the same name. At least we should be careful to distinguish him from the Zoroaster of the Persians, as he is much more ancient, and is said to have been the author of magic, that is to say, the inventor of superstition and avowed imposture. It is said that he died by fire from heaven.

BELUS is said to have taught the priests astronomy and natural philosophy. Being afterwards adored as a divinity, his temple was one of the wonders of the world.

BEROSUS, Marmaridius, Zebrabus, Teucrus, etc. are only known to us by their names.

THE principal dogmas of this philosophy, as far as we are able to judge, consisted in acknowledging only one God as the creator of all things; but this does not imply that they supposed, as we do, the world to be created from nothing, an opinion but little known to antiquity. To this creator they granted a providential direction of his creatures, but they considered the divinity only as the soul of the world, as the source of all intelligences and spirits, many of whom they fancied to preside over different parts of the world. Almost all the barbarous nations of antiquity have had no other idea of God than that of an universal spirit diffused throughout all matter, the principal parts of which spirit were supposed to preside over different parts of the world, while other parts descended into and animated the bodies of distinguished men. From hence all idolatry was derived; for it originally consisted in nothing more than an adoration paid to the different parts of the universe, and to distinguished men, upon account of the parts of the divinity which they were supposed to contain.

From this idea of God was derived that of different orders of spirits or emanations. These spirits

formed classes raised one above the other, in proportion to their respective degrees of intelligence. Of this number there were many who were supposed to bear an ill-will to man, and who strove to deceive him. From hence arose magic. That of the Chaldeans and other barbarous people was a secret worship of the divinity, and an imaginary correspondence with inferior spirits, whose anger they proposed to appease, or whose assistance they hoped to acquire. Besides this, there was a *natural* magic founded upon the virtues of heavenly and sublunary bodies in producing different events. There was also a theurgical magic, by which they formed (as was supposed) close connections with the gods, so that they were admitted to a familiar intercourse, and received the benefits attending so unequal a friendship. Lastly, there was among them a fallacious and impure magic; which taught them to hold a correspondence with terrestrial and impure spirits.

ASTROLOGY was the natural consequence of magic. Being impressed with the notion of an agreement between celestial and terrestrial things, they began to examine the situation and different aspects of the stars. They particularly attended to the aspect of the heavens at the moment of a child's birth. It was supposed that some constellations were favourable, and others malignant: in a word, they considered the destiny of all as written upon the face of the heavens.



DIVINATIONS served, if we may so express it, to give this visionary fabric a finishing. These were drawn from the flight of birds, from the entrails of beasts, and from dreams. In this consisted the greatest part of the philosophy, or to speak more properly, of the theology, of the Chaldeans.

THE generation of the world was a subject which greatly employed the philosophers of antiquity: and the cosmogony, which they also called the theogony, has been philosophically discussed by many of them. The Chaldeans did this in a manner perfectly allegorical, and it is impossible at present to find the moral of their enigmas. We may perceive indeed, that they made *humidity* the original matter, from which other things took their rise. This they said was fecundated by the divine emanation, of which man received an abundant portion. Gods of a second rank were employed in sowing the seeds both in heaven and earth. In the beginning there was nothing but darkness and water; after this animals were formed, which were at first monstrous. A woman named Ornorca had command over them. Belus cut her in two; the animals died, and from thence arose the heavens and the earth.

§ 3. *Of the PERSIANS.*

ZOROASTER, or Zerdusht, was the author of their philosophy. He lived about the time of the captivity of Babylon. Having retired into the mountains he undertook to reform the ancient reli-

gion of the magi, and to re-establish the worship of fire. This religion, which was for ages prior to Zoroaster, placed the most obvious parts of the divinity in the sun. It was from hence also that the opinion was derived of two principles of contrary natures, the first the source of light and good, the other of darkness and evil. But this antient doctrine having fallen into oblivion, the worship of the stars was built upon its ruins, 'till Zoroaster came to bring men back to their antient method of adoration. He rendered himself pleasing to Darius the son of Hytaspes, and brought him over to adopt his sentiments. He then went to confer among the Brachmans, and made many profelytes in the kingdoms bordering upon Persia. He became the leader of his sect, and wrote his principles in a book intitled Zendavesta. The oracles which bear his name are not his, but a forgery contrived by some modern Platonic philosophers.

THIS philosophical religion supported itself for a long time, and had some followers equally conspicuous for their rank and abilities. The generality of them, however, were composed of priests, whose skill in theurgic sciences was thought to be great. They formed a tribe of men distinct from the community, and paid their adorations to fire. There was besides this another tribe of priests, who were attached to the same opinions, who offered many sacrifices, and who had a chief whom they named Archimagus. By either of these the nation

was directed in theological enquiries; and the difference of their opinions gave birth to a diversity of sects.

THE dogmas of the Persian philosophy may be thus concisely summed up. The sovereign of the universe, named Mithra, is an intellectual fire from whence two principles have proceeded that have given birth to the universe. These two principles are opposite to each other; the one, called Oromasdes, is a most pure, active, and spiritual light; the other, called Arimanius, a passive, substantial darkness. From the mixture of these two principles all earthly things have been produced; and from hence may be explained the original of evil upon the earth. But there will be a time when the darkness shall be overcome and entirely dissipated by the light.

As to worship, they maintained, that neither images, nor statues, nor even the stars themselves, were proper objects of adoration.

THE soul, according to them, came from the gods; and, like them, was immortal.

THEIR moral doctrines recommended chastity, equity, honesty, a contempt of pleasure; all which they expressed by commanding to follow the light, and to keep clean of the contagion of darkness, or the conception of matter.

#### § 4. *Of the* INDIANS.

WE are not to confound the philosophy of the ancient inhabitants of India, with that of the peo-

ple who now possess that country. We shall mention the opinions of the latter towards the end of this work. As to the former, we have scarce any knowledge of their tenets, but such as were derived to us through the channel of the Greeks, who, under the conduct of Alexander, penetrated into these countries.

THE Indian philosophers are known by the name of Brachmans. This was a race of men separated from the rest of the world. They resided among mountains, and along the banks of rivers; they lived upon fruits, abstained from the flesh of animals, observed the most strict sobriety, and joined to this the most fatiguing exercises, and often the most excruciating austerities, and permitted no images in their worship. The Brachmans kept a middle course between the Samanaens, whose principles were less rigid; and the Hylobians, who hid themselves in the midst of forests, and who carried their austerities to the utmost excess. Both kings and people always entertained the highest respect for the philosophers, who had the reputation of perfect sanctity. To them was intrusted the administration of the government, and the direction of the morals of the people. Their words were received as oracles, and obeyed without examination; and according to some, magic did not a little contribute to raise their reputation. The most celebrated names among them are those of Buddas, in



remote antiquity; Calanus, in the times of Alexander, and Jarcha of a more modern date.

THEIR philosophy represented God as an intellectual light, who penetrates all things, to whom the world serves as a body, or as a garment. This God is immortal, and governs by his providential care. The soul is said to be of celestial original, and when disengaged from the body must still survive in expectation of a new birth, and of a life to come in which it will be happy. There are deities of a subordinate nature, which it is fit to worship, not by offering them victims, but in celebrating their praise, and above all, by a purity of soul, and the practice of virtue. Astrology and divination were held among these philosophers in the highest esteem; they considered them as the means whereby nature was forced to give up her secrets, as the properest method of penetrating into futurity. Their precepts in morality advised a continual purification, taught a contempt of death, that men ought to prepare for it with continual exercises of the body, and when duly prepared, that it was lawful to seize it by suicide.

§ 5. *Of the ARABIANS.*

IT is not without impropriety that we can allow this people a philosophy: their wandering and unsettled manner of living did not permit them to apply to objects of this nature. At best their philosophy consisted in some divinations, in giving the so-

lution of some enigmas, and in the interpreting of dreams. They had also some turn and talents for poetry.

AMONG the Arabians, however, we meet with the sect of Zabianism, which has had some reputation in antiquity, but of which we have scarce any knowledge except from mutilated anecdotes and uncertain traditions. Although the stars were gods, according to the tenets of this philosophy, yet it did not command an adoration to be paid the stars, but to the inhabitants of them. The sun was the sovereign god of the Zabians or Sabeans, and next him the planets received their principal homage. However, they were divided into two sects, that of the temples, and that of the images, who differed in this respect. The first asserted, that the stars were the temples of immaterial substances, and that in these the mediating spirits had their residence. The latter maintained, that images or statues made by men's hands were the residence of superior spirits, who came to occupy them by means of their irradiations: in consequence of which they paid these statues their adoration, giving to each its respective constellation which they supposed came down to inhabit there. To these they paid all manner of homage, burnt incense before them, cloathed them with their finest garments, and invoked them in all their enchantments.

THE two sects we have been describing united in admitting one common principle of doctrine and

worship; namely, that all men have need of a mediator between them and the divinity. They considered each star as an animated and intelligent body, and took great care to examine the situation and aspects of the planets and constellations. These opinions insensibly led them into idolatry, and all kinds of superstitions, particularly that of Talismans, which had credit for several ages after.

THE ancient philosophy of the Arabians is one of the principal sources of Islamism, or Mahometanism, of which we shall speak in the sequel.

#### § 6. *Of the PHOENICIANS.*

NAVIGATION and commerce were the principal causes of the celebrity of this nation; but, at the same time, these advantages gave them an opportunity at once of deriving knowledge from the countries to which they traded, and of propagating what they knew. Their praises are carried to too great a height, when the Phœnicians are represented as endowed with extraordinary talents, and described as a people among whom all ancient wisdom was deposited. What they have said with regard to the number of the stars amounts to a very small matter: their skill was merely empirical, and it is a false assertion that Pythagoras was obliged to them for his opinions in philosophy.

MOSCHUS Sidonius has been taken without any solid ground for Moses. Most of the antients ascribe to him the system of atoms, which was, as is

pretended, afterwards transmitted to Pythagoras, Leucippus, and Democritus. This however wants proof, and besides it does not agree with the simplicity of the Barbarian philosophy, which we have seen wholly traditional and unsatisfactory.

CADMUS, though we should admit what has been said of him, that he brought a colony into Greece, and introduced letters among them which he had borrowed from the Phœnicians, cannot, however, be placed among the rank of philosophers.

SANCHONIATHON has collected the opinions of antiquity concerning the origin of them, and the cosmogony which passed for current at that time; but his testimony is not of sufficient authority to be relied on. We have no other voucher for the authenticity of this author but Porphyry, who says, that he received his information from Philo Biblos, a writer at present perfectly unknown. The fragments of Sanchoniathon notwithstanding contain several very antient doctrines, in which a dark intellectual air, and a confused chaos, are established as the principles from whence the universe had its original. These principles were mixed together by a generative spirit, and from hence arose the order and harmony of nature.



ARTICLE II. *Of the PHILOSOPHY of the PEOPLE  
of the SOUTH.*

OF these we shall only mention the Egyptians and Ethiopians.

§ I. *Of the EGYPTIANS.*

THENT, or Thoth, called Hermes by the Greeks, and Mercury by the Latins, is the author of the Egyptian philosophy. He was secretary to king Osiris, and to him the nation was indebted for its laws, its hieroglyphical characters, the invention of many arts, the institution of sacrifices, and the elements of almost all the sciences. For all these benefits he was after his death placed among the Gods of a subordinate rank. Long after him there lived another Mercury, who decyphered the hieroglyphics which were written upon columns by the former, explained the sacred dogmas they contained, and wrote them in books which were afterwards regarded as sacred. He taught the Egyptians geometry, astrology, and theology. A great number of books pass under his name which are only forgeries of a latter date; and as to the inventions ascribed to him in particular, it must be owned, that we have no satisfactory proofs of their belonging to him, and the best they are but rude essays that scarce deserve the name of philosophy.

EGYPT has furnished no other philosopher, if we

except the priests, who all aspired at this character. These were divided into distinct orders and colleges, each dignified by peculiar names, as the Prophets, the Singers, the Astrologers, the Scribes, &c. They used a sacred method of instruction, obscured by emblems, ænigmas, and guarded by long and painful initiations. The whole of this at present is very uncertain and obscure.

WHAT there remains no doubt of is, that the Egyptians are a very ancient nation, and that from the beginning it has had its sages, and men of talents, who first instructed the rude people in procuring the necessaries, and afterwards in contriving the conveniences of life. Egypt is known to have been a great and flourishing country at a time when other nations were as yet in primæval rudeness. However, all this hath but little connexion with philosophy.

It seems probable, that different revolutions, such as a general inundation, a remarkable earthquake, or destructive wars, had laid waste this empire, dispersed the greatest part of the inhabitants into different regions of the earth, and that Egypt itself thus relapsed into primæval barbarity. From this state they were brought back by the second Hermes, who recovered and collected into one body their ancient doctrines. It was to preserve this that different colleges of priests were instituted, to whom the care of those doctrines were committed. At that time began the art of keeping some part of

their tenets concealed, and the hieroglyphic character answered that intention. The priests were still the more careful in preserving their mysteries from the vulgar, as they were, in a great measure, the source of all their authority in the state. Their kings and princes were no way jealous of this power, as they were themselves initiated into the same secrets, and admitted into the colleges of the priests.

IN general, what is called the Egyptian philosophy was only a politic institution, fitted to the purposes of that peculiar government, and supplying the exigencies of the state. To this was joined some small skill in mathematics, a practical knowledge in medicine, with large pretences to astrology and magic.

THERE are many distinctions to be made as well in their theology as cosmology, according as these doctrines have been treated by them at different periods of time, either in that age which preceded the invasion of Cambyfes, that which succeeded, or that of Alexander the Great. In those periods which succeeded, the Egyptian doctrines were entirely altered and disfigured by the fictitious mythology of the Greeks.

IN considering those external doctrines of the Egyptians, which were called *exoteric*, they regarded the stars, men, and even beasts themselves, as so many divinities, or beings in which a part of the deity resided. But if we search into the secret or *esoteric* doctrines, which was their real philosophy,

we there learn that the divinity is diffused throughout the whole universe; that the emanations of this spirit enter into the bodies of great men, or those distinguished personages which have given laws to nations; that the principal seat of the divine majesty is in the sun, the moon and the planets; that all things are filled with this soul of the world, and consequently replete with the divinity; that in the same manner all things return into this soul of the world; that matter is its opposite, and combats with it by its imperfections, but that at last it will be overcome; that the soul is immortal, and undergoes divers transmigrations; that matter is eternal, and that the divine spirit is strictly united to it; that from this union has proceeded the world, named Orus, the son of Osiris and Isis; and that animals have had their birth from putrefaction. As to morals, they taught that the gods, kings, and parents, were to be honoured, and that injuries were to be done to none: sin was to be avoided, and adultery in particular to be detested.

THE contradictions which are apparent in the theology of the Egyptians may be removed by having recourse, as we have already insinuated, to the different periods in which it was taught. The first religion of this people was extremely simple; their great men were raised to the rank of divinity, and from thence came the gods of the Egyptians. When Cambyfes invaded Egypt, the dogmas of the Persians, particularly those of the Magi, took the lead.



From thence were derived the fables of Osiris, Isis, and Typhon, which the Persians applied to their three principles, Mithra, Oromasdes, and Arimanius. Lastly, after the conquest of Alexander, the Greeks, who were established at Alexandria, and in other provinces of Egypt, being educated in the principles of Pythagoras and Plato, introduced them here, and blended them with the ancient doctrines of the place. The Asiatic philosophers after this made another mixture of the doctrines of Zoroaster with the corrupted Egyptian; and from thence arose a new kind of theology, which continued during the times of the Ptolomeys. We see by this brief account how difficult it is to determine with precision what were the opinions and doctrines of the Egyptians, as well in general, as in the particular periods which we have remarked upon\*.

## § 2. *Of the ETHIOPIANS.*

THE philosophers of the Ethiopians were men of austere morals, whom the heat of the climate obliged to go naked, and who principally resided along the banks of the Nile. They were not only the philosophers but the priests of their nation, and held in the highest veneration by them. They were divided into colleges, like those of the Egyptians. They taught an utter contempt of death. Detesting idolatry, they acknowledged only one God,

\* The best work we have upon this subject is that of the late Mr. Jablouski, professor at Francfort upon the Oder, which has for its title, *Pantheon Egyptiacum*.

of infinite goodness, eternal, and the cause of all things. They at the same time admitted a principle of evil, but considered him as mortal. They taught that the soul was immortal, that consequently death was not to be dreaded, and that man should be inspired with courage at its approach. Lastly, they addicted themselves to the observation of the stars. Among these it was that Atlas lived, upon whose shoulders, as the fable has it, the skies were placed; only implying that he was an excellent astronomer, and an observer of the aspect of the heavens.

WHATEVER is further said of the philosophy of the Ethiopians is merely the fruit of invention, and had its rise in the fertile imagination of Philostratus. It is probable that this nation hath had its sages, but they were, perhaps, more commendable from the austerity of their manners than the comprehensiveness of their understanding.

ARTICLE III. *Of the PHILOSOPHY of the WESTERN NATIONS.*

AMONG these we find, 1, the Celts; 2, the Etruscans; 3, the Romans in the infancy of their state.

§ I. *Of the CELTS.*

THE fame of the Druids has been long celebrated. They were separated into different colleges,

and they kept schools, where they instructed their disciples in the arts of government and œconomy. They presided over the religion of their country, at once the priests and judges of the people. They who were initiated into the secret doctrines formed three classes, namely the bards, the prophets, and the druids. As the secrets of their religion have been preserved more inviolably than those of any other sect, and as they initiated but few in comparison to their doctrines, they remain almost entirely unknown. We know in general, that they regarded God as the soul of the world; that they supposed there were powerful spirits, who presided over different parts of the world, over mountains, rivers and rocks. They taught to pay worship to these divinities, but without temples or idols. Possessed with an eager desire to know futurity, they employed all the superstitious arts which they thought necessary for accomplishing their purpose: and from thence were derived the opinions, that subsist even to this day, of the intercourse between men and dæmons; opinions first propagated by imposture, and continued by credulity. They also entered into some researches concerning the origin of the world, which they affirmed proceeded from a chaos operated upon by the divinity. They called the first man Mannus, and the first woman Emla.

THE learned are not agreed upon the exact limits that are to be assigned to the Celtic nations. What is certain is that its colonies have extended

from the most northern to the most western parts of the old world, and that, beside the Scythians, we may comprehend under this denomination the Gauls, the Germans, the Britons, and the Spaniards, who in after times, when their manners began to be softened, were distinguished from the former, who went by the name of Hyperboreans.

§ 2. *Of the ETRUSCANS.*

THE philosophers of this nation have been esteemed as great naturalists, from their exceeding care in the observation of meteors, thunder, birds, etc. These observations, however, were rather the effects of ignorance than philosophy, as they were only directed by blind superstition and imposture. Their dogmas are unknown, if we except their asserting that the world was created, and that it was destined to undergo surprising revolutions.

§ 3. *Of the ROMANS in the Infancy of their State.*

ROMULUS was the founder of Rome, but Numa Pompilius was its lawgiver. It has been thought that he received his religion and maxims from Pythagoras, but this is an anachronism; for the second king of Rome lived many years before the philosopher of Samos. It was among the Sabines that he acquired his knowledge; but as to philosophy; neither his nor that of Rome itself was worthy regard, 'till Greece became one of the conquest of that empire.



ARTICLE IV. *Of the PHILOSOPHY of the HYPERBOREAN NATIONS.*

WHAT we know on this subject is so very small, that it is scarcely necessary to distinguish the Sythians from the Thracians. Their philosophy is only known by some few of their philosophers having travelled into Greece, where they shewed themselves equally respectable for the purity of their morals, the wisdom of their conversation, and even by the readiness of their wit. Among the number we find Abaris, Anacharsis, Toxaris, and Zamolxis who is reputed to be the last Pythagorean philosopher among his countrymen. This, however, is but a fiction of the modern Platonists who have covered this subject with fables.

THE wisdom of the Scythians and Thracians differed totally from that of the Grecians. Disdaining the amusement of empty altercation, they brought all their lessons home to practice. They laboured to inspire virtue, exhorted to the love of their country, and the contempt of death. To these principles they added some religious ceremonies.

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## C H A P. II.

*Of the PHILOSOPHY of the GREEKS.*

WE may consider their philosophy in its infant state, and in its age of maturity.

ARTICLE I. *Of the PHILOSOPHY of GREECE in its infant State.*

THE Grecians were a mixture of colonies that originally came from Egypt, Phœnicia, or Thrace. A few men of superior abilities and virtue strove at first to soften their manners, which were as yet brutal; and to this purpose made use of a religion, which was calculated to inspire a love to their country, and to introduce regularity and subordination. The first progress was slow and difficult, but after a time their endeavours were crowned with success, greater than could have been expected. Greece became the seat of politeness, arts, and sciences, the center of legislation, the parent of wit and genius, and the standard of imitation to all the nations around. Theology and politics began this edifice, and reared it to a considerable height: it was not till it was nearly completed that the Greeks turned themselves to more refined speculation, and gave being to those various systems which compose the body of ancient philosophy.

WE may divide the infant philosophy of the Greeks into the mythological and political branches of it.

§ 1. *Of the ancient fabulous PHILOSOPHY of the GREEKS.*

IT would be a fruitless enterprize to attempt determining with precision the hidden meaning of all the fables invented by the Greeks. The colonies which came from different countries all furnished their contingents to enlarge Grecian mythology, and this mixture hath produced impenetrable confusion. This inconvenience must still grow upon us, as they continued to admit men, who were remarkable either for their courage or services in society, into the number of their gods. The actions of their lives were confounded with those parts of their history which were to be understood in an allegorical sense. Their mythology consisted in giving the world a soul, as we have already seen was common among other nations. This soul was diffused through all, but had its principal residence in some of the more remarkable parts of the universe. From hence was derived the explication of their mythology, and the source of their superstition. However, in examining the subject more minutely, we shall find much more room for conjecture than certainty.

THE leaders of colonies made it their practice to establish the religion and morals of their native country in their new government. The most noted

among these chiefs were Phoroneus and Cœrops, both Egyptians, Orpheus of Thrace, and Cadmus of Phœnicia. As they all came from countries where secret doctrines prevailed, they preserved the same in their new acquisitions; and thus they instructed the people only in the outward form of their doctrines, which was merely a tissue of fable and allegory. The vulgar were contented with the surface of things, and went not farther. Each day made some new progress in the mythological system, and encreased it with new allegories; so that we are not to be astonished, that in process of time it became the heap of unintelligible absurdity, which it now appears. The most simple opinions were obscured by glosses and commentaries; and those doctrines, which were at first obscure, must, of consequence, only by succeeding interpretations acquire new degrees of obscurity. We will content ourselves with saying something of the most illustrious personages of those ages of which we are speaking.

PROMETHEUS formed man, and by the mixture of elements of which he made him give at once motion to his body and ideas to his soul. Having stolen fire from heaven, Jupiter condemned him to be bound to mount Caucasus, where a vultur continually preyed upon his liver, which constantly grew in proportion as it was devoured. At first sight it appears that this has a concealed historical meaning. Prometheus must have been a man of superior genius, who first instructed the Greeks in the princi-



ples of the arts and sciences, taught them what was useful in supplying their necessities, and particularly the uses of fire. But, as he violated the secret mysteries which he had derived from the Egyptians, he was detained as a prisoner for some time, after which he was released.

LINUS rendered himself equally famous for philosophy and music. Apollo, being jealous that he had invented stringed instruments, put him to death. He wrote concerning the course of the sun and moon, on the generation of animals and plants, upon divers parts of theology and cosmogony. His writings, however, are lost. His disciples were, Hercules, whose labours and exploits are well known; Thamyris, of whom we shall speak hereafter; and Orpheus, who merits our particular regard.

ORPHEUS was a native of Thrace, but as to his extraction, or the earlier part of his life, they are entirely unknown. He travelled into Egypt in search of wisdom, and having gone through the usual forms of initiation, he instructed himself thoroughly in the mysteries and theology of that people. He particularly excelled in music, and carried his skill so far that it gave rise to the fable of beasts and forests dancing to the music of his lyre; which probably means no more than that attention which was paid to his dictates by men as rude and savage as the beasts themselves. Being skilled in the secrets of medicine, he had influence enough on Pluto to get back his wife, who perhaps had been ravished

from him; but soon after his wife falling into the former misfortune, she left him without redress. Being resolved to put a stop to the excesses of the Thracian woman in their feasts, he excited their indignation to such a degree, that they tore him in pieces. We must regard the imputation of incest, and those debaucheries with which he has been charged by antiquity, as calumny without support. His writings procured him great reputation, but they have not been able to survive the injuries of time. Whatever has been ascribed to him in succeeding ages is only the supposititious deceits of modern Platonists. At most, there are but a few fragments of his works, preserved by his disciples, and expressive of his principles. He has always been considered among the Greeks as the original inventor of music, magic, astrology, mysteries, initiations, &c. In fact, the Greeks were possessed of many secret ceremonies and mysteries, which they derived from their first legislators, and which contributed to strengthen the ties of religion, and thus improve society, by uniting mankind in a similitude of worship. The principal mysteries of Greece were those of Bacchus, of Hecate, the Eleusinian, the Panathenean, and Thesmophorean mysteries. It was not without long previous purifications that people were admitted to the knowledge and celebration of these. All this, perhaps, might have been useful and even necessary in the beginning to impose upon a fierce and untractable people, but in the sequel, fraud and enthu-

fiaſm rendered theſe institutions ſacrilegious and inſufferable.

THE philoſophy of Orpheus, as far as we have any knowledge of it at preſent, was partly theological, and partly coſmological and phyſical. According to the firſt, he conceived the divine emanations of the ſoul of the world as ſo many gods, and from thence is the Græcian polytheiſm particularly derived. However, when he explained himſelf in confidence to his diſciples, he aſſerted that all things were originally in God, and that he produced them from his own ſubſtance by a kind of generation ſimilar to that of hermaphrodites. He added that the divinity was a ſpirit which prevaded and continually wandered over the univerſe, or that he was rather the univerſe itſelf, that all things ſprung from him, and that all were to return into him. His explication of the origin of things was a conſequence of the emanations before mentioned. Before the world was formed, God joined to chaos compoſed the univerſe. This being in its firſt ſtate a rude collection of matter, he afterwards ſhaped and embellished it. All the parts of the univerſe are parts of God, limbs belonging to the divinity, and intimately united to him. He held that true and ſovereign good conſiſted in being joined to God, which however could not be obtained without the aſſiſtance of mysteries and purifications. The univerſe he aſſerted was filled with ſpirits, which were emanations of the divinity. The chief ſpirits pre-

sided over the principal part of the world, and the different regions of our earth. These divinities intermarried with each other in a manner conformable to their nature. With respect to cosmology, properly so called, the opinions of Orpheus may be reduced to this, that God first produced ether, and to this he added chaos and night. From the assemblage of these three principles, an egg was formed which opened of itself, and then the heaviest parts descended, the lightest mounted aloft, and each arranged itself in the proper situation. If we desire to penetrate into the meaning of this allegory, it is probably calculated to insinuate that light and darkness, which are understood to mean ether and night, were before all other things created by the divinity; after which the separation of the heavens and the earth were affected. According to the same hypothesis men were formed like plants from the ground, and at first were monstrous, such as the Cyclops, the giants with an hundred hands, etc. The world was said to have its periodical revolutions, which prepared it for its final dissolution by fire. Each planet was a world. The fixed stars were bodies of fire endowed with a soul. The souls of men confined in the body, as if in a prison, were supposed to survive after death to receive the recompence or the punishment due to their behaviour in life. The practice of purifications, and a skill in mysteries, were said to be the best means of securing one and avoiding the other.



MUSEUS, the disciple of Orpheus, established the mysteries of religion among the Athenians, and brought them to the highest perfection. He was at once a theologist, a naturalist, a physician, an interpreter of mysteries, and a prophet. He was the father of Eumolpus.

THAMYRIS was a musician, an art which in these times of barbarity outweighed every other merit. However being overcome in a public trial of skill, he was so violently afflicted at his disgrace that he lost his sight. He composed several works upon the cosmogony which have long since been lost.

AMPHION, another personage still more famous for the same talents, made use of his art to soften the fierce manners of the Thebans, from whence have arisen all the fables concerning his amazing skill. He taught theology, religion and morality. His precepts enjoined very great austerities.

MELAMPUS was a second Orpheus, and of great abilities: having been initiated into the mysteries of the Egyptians, he diffused them among the Greeks under the vail of theogony. He was at once a physician and a divine, and we are told surprising things of his skill in both capacities. Having recovered the daughter of king Proteus from a very extraordinary malady, by the means of bathing and hellebore, he received a part of the kingdom as his recompence. After his death a feast was instituted in

honour of him, and sacrifices appointed as to an inferior deity.

HESIOD is well known by his poetical works, and he deserves a place here, since he attempted to explain the origin of the world in his Theogony. This was a subject handled by numbers of the writers of that age, but their works have not reached us: in these we find only fable and obscurity. The ancient historical traditions are deformed by a mixture of feigned absurdities; and to encrease the obscurity, these fables were made use of to explain natural appearances to give a greater sanction to religion. This produced a diversity of opinions, which varied according to the time, the place, and the character of the writer; so that the whole forms a labyrinth through which human sagacity must despair of finding an open passage. There are, say they, two principles of all things, chaos and night. Nothing is produced from nothing. Chaos is a confused assemblage of all things, and the womb of all things, and the womb of sleeping nature. Night is the first quality. Between these there was a strife which produced the separation of matter, in the parts of which there was such a concord that similar things united to their similitudes. This concord was impressed upon matter by God himself, when he first produced the chaos, and it was the same power also that confirmed the union of its parts by means of his intelligence. The lightest parts being lifted up, while the heaviest descended, the heavens

and the earth then first made their appearance; and the latter marrying with the former produced the sea by exhalation. Men were produced next in succession: among these there were powerful tyrants, and illustrious men, who after their death returned to the stars.

EPIMENIDES of Crete, after having slept fifty-seven years, became famous for many miracles. He had the particular secret of making his soul part from his body whenever he thought proper. He exercised the priest-hood with great splendor, having presided at the lustrations and expiations of several cities. His predictions were in high repute: though after all, he must have been no better than a complete impostor.

LASTLY, Homer must not be passed over in silence; his poems have rendered him immortal. If he was not a philosopher by profession, his works are nevertheless the most copious repository of ancient philosophy; and without indulging that blind admiration which some have bestowed upon him, we cannot deny but that his knowledge was surprising for the time in which he lived.

## §2. *Of the ancient political* PHILOSOPHY *of the* GREEKS.

THIS philosophy made a rapid progress. Achaia, Ionia, and that part of Italy which was called Magna Græcia, were all peopled by republics and petty states; each state governed by the wise max-

ims of its respective legislator. Of this number were the Locrians, to whom Zaleucus had prescribed very severe laws; that of Catanea, founded by Charondas; that of Athens, which had successively for its legislators Triptolemus, Draco, and Solon; that of Lacedemon, where Lycurgus introduced his rigid discipline; and that of Crete, over which Minos and Radamanthus presided. These extraordinary men in general were called Sages; but there were seven who particularly were honoured with the title, and who are called to this day, the Seven Sages of Greece. The original of this appellation is derived from an accidental cause. Some fishermen having taken up from the sea a golden tripod in their nets, some who had previously purchased their draught demanded it as their property. The affair was carried before the judges, of whom we are speaking, who would not decide the controversy, but referred them to the Oracle of Delphos. It is more probable, however, that the tripod was proposed as a prize in the solemn assembly of Greece for those who excelled in wisdom and law; and that these were the personages to whom it was adjudged. Whatever was the manner, it is certain from this time they were called the Seven Sages; and though there are different lists of their names, yet those that follow are most generally acknowledged.

THALES will be mentioned below, at the head of those who have reduced philosophy into a body, and have given it a systematic form.



SOLON the Athenian was a man of great talents, a good poet, an expert general, and an excellent legislator. He had the command of the troops in the expedition to Salamis, and took the island. He delivered the republic from usurers who preyed upon the people. He mitigated the laws of Draco, which from their severity were said to have been written in blood. He established new laws of his own, which he enforced by the example of his own obedience. Leaving Athens he travelled into several countries; particularly in Scythia he impressed them with the deepest reverence for his merit and virtues. He improved himself in all the secret learning of the Egyptians, and even took a voyage to Egypt to confer with Thales. He died at Cyprus. His saying (for each of the sages had one peculiar) was *Consider thy end*.

CHILLO, one of the Lacedemonian Ephori, was equally remarkable for his justice and his moderation. He had the gift of prophecy. He was the author of many laconic sentences, the shortness of which encreased their force. His principal saying was, *Know thyself*.

PITTACUS, of Mytelene, was a man of wit, and a good soldier. He overcame the Athenians, and refused the government of his country, which was offered him. However, being at last overcome by the instances of his fellow citizens, he assumed the reins of power, and governed with exemplary mo-

deration. He was well skilled in legislation, and an excellent poet. His saying was, *Know the times.*

BIAS, of Priene, a city of Ionia, was equally virtuous, generous, and brave. He delivered his city when besieged, by a stratagem. Being employed in procuring the riches of the mind alone, he with reason boasted that he carried his All about him. His wit and learning procured him a kind of reception in many courts; and his saying was, *Love your friend, as if you expected him to be your enemy.*

CLEOBULUS, originally of Rhodes, learned wisdom of the Egyptians, and was particularly skilful in the unfolding of enigmas which were then in much repute. But his real excellence consisted in the admirable lessons of morality which he gave, and practised in his government of the Lydians. His daughter Cleobuline inherited his wisdom and his virtues. His saying was, *There is nothing better than moderation.*

PERIANDER, the tyrant, by which only was understood the king of the Corinthians, was greatly censured by the Greeks for having erected a monarchy upon the ruins of an aristocracy, by which his city was governed before. Notwithstanding this, his merit enrolled him among the number of the wise men, and his laws, though a little severe, were nevertheless admirable. He was obnoxious to the Greeks only for having repressed that freedom of which they were jealous to excess.

To these illustrious names that of Æsop is usually

added, though he was but a slave. His fables are some of the most precious remains of antiquity; they contain at once the most excellent morality, joined to the most insinuating method of enforcing it. As to the events of his life, they are very uncertain; what now passes for such is but a collection of puerile fictions invented in the latter ages of obscurity.

ARTICLE II. *Of the PHILOSOPHY of GREECE in its State of Maturity.*

AT this period begin the different systems and sects which have ever since divided the opinions of mankind. We shall consider this part of philosophy, 1, as it was in Magna Græcia, or Italia Inferior; 2, we shall treat of the sects that took rise from that of Pythagoras; 3, of the philosophy of Greece properly so called.

§ I. *Of the SECT of PYTHAGORAS, otherwise called the ITALIC SECT.*

WE have already insinuated, that the inferior parts of Italy, with the adjacent isles, having been early colonized by the Greeks, went by the name of Græcia Magna. Pythagoras, by nation a Greek, of whom we shall speak more amply below, having taken up his residence in this country, and having there founded his school, his sect received the name of the Italic. It continued to flourish for about the space of two ages, and was then destroyed; but

from its ruins the Eleatic sect sprung up, which was afterwards the fruitful mother to which all other Grecian sects owed their existence.

THE history of the Italic sect is replete with difficulty, uncertainty and conjecture. We have long lost the genuine works of the philosophers of this sect, and what the ancients have transmitted to us as theirs are mere fabulous puerilities. The prejudices in favour of Pythagoras, or against him, have given rise to numberless falsehoods; and the modern Platonists, in particular, seem to have taken pleasure in ascribing several fictitious miracles to him, by which they hoped to obscure those of our Saviour and his apostles. On this subject, therefore, criticism must conduct us with its most steady light, in shewing what we are to reject, what to admit, and on what to keep our assent suspended.

PYTHAGORAS was born between the time of the forty-third and fifty-third Olympiad, in the island of Samos. His father took him while yet an infant into Phœnicia, and entrusted him to the care of the celebrated philosopher Pherecydes. There are many falsehoods propagated concerning the different masters by whom he was instructed. What is certain is, that he travelled into Egypt, and was there initiated into the mysteries of the country. There he began by consulting the Phœnicians from whom he derived his origin. We are forbidden by chronology to give credit to what is said of his taking a journey into Judea, where he was made a captive,



and carried by order of Cambyſes into Babylon, from whence he penetrated as far as the Indies. It is more rational to believe that, after having returned from Egypt to Ionia, and having conſulted many of the moſt famous oracles, he erected a ſchool of philoſophy in Samos, the place of his birth. As he was not a little addiſted to impoſture in the propagation of his doctrines, he ſhut himſelf up for ſome time in a cave, where he boated that he had acquired an inſight into ſeveral myſteries. Leaving Samos, he next went to Crotona, in Italy, where he had a great concourſe of hearers and diſciples. Here he appears to have been well ſkilled in the arts of deception, and was able to impoſe upon the credulity of the people, who conſidered him as a worker of miracles; ſo that he may be placed among the number of remarkable impoſtors. His morals, however, were, or ſeemed to be, ſtrict and regular; his addreſs polite and engaging. He always teſtified a great reſpect for religion, and neglected no opportunity of acquiring popular applauſe, and of rendering himſelf an object of veneration. By theſe talents he at length ſucceeded in his aim; he was regarded by the people, not only as a perſon of exalted merit, but one of a ſuperior order of beings, who came upon the earth to honour and improve it by his preſence. He had by his wife Theano two ſons, Telauges and Mneſarchus, and three daughters. His family inherited the emoluments ariſing from his ſchool. The time, as well as the

manner, of his death is uncertain, though all antiquity agree that he ended his days in a violent manner.

It is not known whether Pythagoras left any writings behind him, though it is probable that his attachment to the secret method of instruction prevented this. Whatever now goes under his name is, at best, the work of some of his disciples, who added their master's name, according to the custom of the ancients. The most celebrated of all these are the golden verses of Pythagoras, as they are called.

His doctrine was twofold, public and secret. He taught the former indiscriminately to all, and it chiefly consisted of rules respecting our moral conduct. The latter, on the contrary, was communicated only to a few of his most intimate disciples, whom he had united into a kind of community, and bound by the most strict observances. The auditors of Pythagoras were obliged to undergo a long and painful noviciate before they could expect to be admitted partners of his secret philosophy. They were to divest themselves of all their worldly possessions, to observe a strict silence for several years, and engaged never to reveal upon any account the mysteries of their profession. After all these preparations, they were at length admitted behind the veil; the depths of his philosophy were disclosed, and they became mathematicians, naturalists, metaphysicians, and some of them legislators. There

were fixed and regulated exercises for every part of the day, which they employed either in speculation, music, dancing, sacrificing, or walking for recreation. Their food was also under divers regulations; some sorts of vegetables were prohibited, such as beans, and the more perfect amongst them entirely abstained from all animal food whatsoever. All the Pythagorean philosophy, the most secret not excepted, was taught in allegory, and from hence arises the obscurity of the Pythagorean symbols, the explanation of which has exhausted much vain learning and fruitless conjecture.

IN general, the whole body of Pythagorean philosophy is at present involved in impenetrable obscurity, which proceeds from different causes; the principal of which are, the silence of the sect with regard to their more hidden doctrines falsely ascribed to Pythagoras by his adversaries, and the confusion introduced into all ancient philosophy by the modern Platonists, who, by attempting to amend the tenets of philosophers, have altered and disfigured them. The enthusiasm, even of those who call themselves philosophers, has injured their cause more than that which has had its rise from the bosom of religion.

THE principal intent of this philosophy seems to have been the disengaging the soul from too intimate an union with the body, and the elevating it by degrees, particularly by means of mathematical preparations, to the intuition of the reality of things,

things that subsist by themselves only. To answer this purpose, his disciples began by arithmetic, of which there is little satisfactory to be said at present. Pythagoras distinguished numbers into intellectual and scientific. The first existed, according to him, from all eternity in the divine understanding, and from thence all things proceeded by the extension of procreative intellect, and the production of unity in action. To this he added, that an infinite number was even; that a monade, or unit, was the beginning of rest, and proceeded from the divinity; that a dual number proceeded from this, and from thence matter in its unformed and discordant state. He asserted that a ternary number was the first perfect calculation, and that this comprehended the most profound mysteries of divine philosophy. He went on to teach that the number six was perfect, seven sacred, and ten harmonic; and that, in short, by means of numbers it was possible to predict what was to come, from whence came the art of arithmomaney. After this came music, which was not to be considered so much as an object for the pleasure of the ear as the understanding. He made this art to result from the concordance of contraries, and gave its parts their proper names, such as diapason, diapente, diatessaron. He then divided it into three kinds, the diatonic, chromatic, and enharmonic; and shewed the relation of each sound upon the monochord. This music, thus regulated, with the addition of chants, modulations,



and rythms, he was of opinion would correct morals, and cure all the diseases of the soul. As to geometry, this philosopher added figures to numbers, to determine and represent the elements of things. He carried this science so far as to invent several problems, which are of the utmost utility at this day. In his astronomy he supposes ten heavenly spheres, the last of which was opposed to our earth. The sun he alleged was placed in the middle, and the planets and earth moved about it as round a center. The movement of the planets was in harmony, and highly melodious, but impossible to be heard by human ears. The moon, and the rest of the planets, he asserted were worlds inhabited like ours; and he held that there were antipodes.

If we go on to the tenets which more particularly characterised the Pythagorean philosophy, we shall find them asserting, that all things are essentially beautiful and divine, immaterial, and incorruptible; that the name of creatures improperly belongs to those things which are subject to the laws of generation; that the end of philosophy is to conduct the soul to the intuitive knowledge of God, and thus making men partakers of the divine nature; that for this intent man should disengage the soul from the body and its passions by a philosophical death; that the soul retiring into itself would thus be capable of greater elevations; and that an happy disposition would still farther assist these aspirations

towards the divinity. To all this Pythagoras added this admirable maxim, *That a wise man is surprized at nothing.*

THESE general principles were supported by more particular institutions, which regarded either the education of youth, and were called *pædæutic*, or the government of the state, and had the name of *politic*. The precepts of the former were, that the pupil should receive instruction; that he should keep silence, abstain from animal food, acquire courage, and labour to be temperate and sagacious. Virtue was considered by him as constituting human perfection, and reason was acknowledged as the best guide and instructor. The soul was supposed to have three principal affections; knowledge regulated by reason, anger by force, and desire by appetite: from whence proceeded all the virtues, such as patience, continence, courage, temperance, justice, etc. His politic institutions may be reduced to these heads: men ought to live in society united by friendship; they are bound in duty to pay worship to the Gods, and reverence the dead. The general principle of all these doctrines was, that men should follow God. The idea which he formed of this supreme being was, that he was the soul of the world, diffused through all its parts, and that all that had life received it from him; that he was an invisible being that supported the world, had created matter from his own substance, and governed all things by an unalterable necessity. He characterised this being

by the different epithets of the first Monade, the intellectual fire, and the warmth of the supreme ether. After God, were placed beings endued with mind; such as the gods, heroes, dæmons, and souls of men: of whom the air is full. His explication of the phænomena of nature, consisted in saying, that all things came from unity and the dual number; that the world was the work of God; that destiny is the cause of the order which reigns in it; that the sun and the stars are gods; that the planets are worlds; that the moon is like our earth; that mankind have always existed, and will never have an end; that the soul is a number which moves itself; that it is reasonable and immortal, and that it was originally separated from the divine substance with which it was united.

THE number of Pythagoras's disciples was very great, and his school subsisted long after him; but envy, which had for a long time secretly persecuted him, at length assaulted him with open violence. The people set fire to the house in which he kept his school; the greatest part of his scholars were butchered, and the rest sent into exile. Aristeus, a celebrated mathematician, collected the remains of this philosophy; and having headed the sect himself, he left his collections and his employment to Mnesarchus and Teleuges, the sons of Pythagoras, from whom a succession of philosophers was continued to the times of Ptolomy Lagus. In this school also there were female philosophers.

THE principal followers of the philosophy of Pythagoras deserve only the name of Semi-Pythagoreans, as the doctrines of the founder were greatly altered, particularly in those parts which attempted to explain the appearances of nature. Let us take a transient view of the most remarkable.

ECPHANTUS of Syracuse. He pretended that it was impossible to arrive at the knowledge of truth, and supposed that the first principles of things consisted in an infinite collection of individual corpuscles, or monades, to which he added a vacuum. According to him all bodies move by a divine power.

HIPPO of Rhegium taught that heat and cold, or in other words, fire and water, were the principles of things; that fire, by which he meant the spiritual fire, came forth from the water, and leaving the chaos formed the world. The soul he said was produced in the same manner from moisture.

EMPEDOCLES of Agrigentum was the most celebrated of the Pythagoreans. He lived in his own country with the utmost splendor, and was the declared enemy of tyrants. He was an excellent naturalist, which got him the reputation of a worker of miracles. He was not less celebrated for his abilities in physic, to which he also added magic, and a taste for poetry. It is told of him, that he ended his days by throwing himself into the mouth of mount *Ætna*; but this is a fable. As to his opinions, he asserted that we should judge of truth not by our senses, as the senses generally gave us false



information. He made reason to come from without, as a thing that was in some measure infused into man, and he gave it for its object intelligible things. With regard to the interpretation of nature, he established a double principle of all things, one active; namely, the Monade, or God: the other passive, or matter. The first was the intellectual fire from whence all things came, and into which they must return. He admitted but of one world, and submitted terrestrial things to the government of dæmons or inferior spirits. He asserted, that matter was perfectly inert, but supposed that, prior to the elements, all matter was composed of small round particles, which had motion of themselves, and from their agreement or disagreement all things were produced. He may be considered as the author of the four elements, earth, air, fire, water; of which all mixtures whatsoever are said to be composed.

EPICARMUS of Cos taught philosophy at Syracuse, and was also the author of some comedies. He advanced that nothing was produced by nothing; that thus the Gods, by which he meant the sun and the stars, existed from all eternity: he added, that matter was continually in motion, and that death has nothing in it either to be feared or desired.

OCELLUS Lucanus is known by his short treatise concerning the origin of the world, which still subsists. Aristotle has been greatly obliged to him for many of his opinions. The universe according to

him has neither had a beginning, nor can have an end. He contended for essences of things, which escape the senses; and he asserted that all bodies that moved performed their motions in circles.

TIMEUS of Locris was a great astronomer, and an expert naturalist. He also wrote a treatise upon the world, where he acknowledges two causes of all things; God the creator of intellectual substances, and the necessity or matter which has been productive of bodies. Plato has followed him in many particulars. There are none of the Semi-Pythagoreans in whose works we may more easily see how far they have departed from the opinions of their founder than in those of Timeus. Instead of considering the universe as one whole, as a perfect monade, he has adopted a dualism, or two principles of things; and this afterwards became the favourite system of Plato. We ought to be very attentive in making this distinction, which will prevent us from confounding the philosophy of Pythagoras with that of Plato; into which error we might be induced from the former making use of the duade as an original of all things, first deduced from unity.

ARCHYTAS of Tarentum was famous for being the master of Plato, Eudoxus, and Philolaus. He was an excellent mathematician, particularly in that part of the science which regards mechanics. He acquired reputation in his legislative capacity. He is said to be the inventor of the ten categories.

He asserted that God was the beginning, the supporter and the end of all things.

ALCMAEON was equally celebrated for his skill in natural philosophy and medicine. He is the first of the Italic sect who treated of the nature of things. He reduced all pluralities to a dualism; that is, to the vicissitudes which are wrought by the opposite shocks of contrary qualities. He placed the divinity among the stars, and ascribed a perpetual motion to the soul.

HIPPASUS was born in Italy. His disciples were surnamed Acorymatic, perhaps from their receiving their instructions verbally and not in writing. Their chief knowledge consisted in their mathematical acquirements. He fixed the principle of all things in fire, which he regarded as the divinity. This fire he asserted by being extinguished produced all things, and that all things must hereafter return into it. He had the misfortune of perishing in the sea.

PHILOLAUS of Crotona was the first who divulged the philosophy of Pythagoras, by selling the works which contained it to Plato. All the dogmas ascribed to him are only the opinions of Pythagoras strengthened by mathematical calculations. He died with resentment for having been accused of attempting to render himself tyrant of Crotona.

EUDOXUS of Cnidus acquired great reputation by his astronomical abilities. Being sent to Athens when he was young, he there became the disciple of

Plato, and afterwards went to encrease his knowledge among the Egyptians. His life was exemplary and irreproachable.

§ 2. *Of the SECTS that took rise from that of*  
PYTHAGORAS.

ALL the Greek sects are commonly divided into the Italic and Ionic: but this distinction is not sufficient to ascertain their peculiar tenets; for the Italic sects, though they retained the name of their first founder Pythagoras, yet adhered but very vaguely to his opinions.

*Of the ELEATIC SECT.*

THIS had for its founder Xenophanes, of Colophon, who died at the age of a hundred. He was the disciple of Telauges, the son of Pythagoras. Being banished from his native country, he took refuge in Sicily, first at the city of Zancle, and afterwards at Catana, getting his livelihood by singing. He wrote a metaphysical treatise upon the nature of things. His philosophy is obscure, as well from the want of proper testimonies remaining concerning it, as from the double method which he pursued, one conformable to simple appearances, and the other founded in reason. He opposed his system to those of Epimenides and Thales. He asserted, that all things were but one; that God, the world, and all the changes of nature, were only



different appearances of one and the same being. From hence he was consequently led to affirm, that nothing could produce nothing; and that, therefor, all that now actually exists has existed from all eternity, and forms a real unity perfectly similar in its parts, immoveable, and immutable; and that in this consists the eternal and incorporeal divinity, which sees, hears, and understands all things, and is all things. In bringing these opinions to greater precision, it seems that Xenophanes would have it, that the universe, as to its nature and substance, is one; that it consists of matter, and the divine energy, with which that matter is impregnated; and that this energy was to be considered as a quality inherent in matter, which gives existence to the universe. Hence, therefor, matter is immutable, and its changes may be reduced to simple appearances; motion itself is one of those, which is in reality nothing in itself; there is neither generation nor corruption in the nature of things; the senses deceive us, and are incapable of leading us to the knowledge of truth. Lastly, this philosopher admitted many worlds, infinite and immutable. He asserted that the sun was but a cloud of fire, and that there were different suns for the different climates.

THE disciples of Xenophanes may be distinguished into metaphysicians and naturalists.

PARMENIDES offers himself at the head of the former. He was of Elis, and had been the auditor

of Xenophanes, Anaximander, and some other Pythagorean philosophers. Having passed some years in the tumult of civil life, he at last threw himself into the arms of philosophy. His virtues were so great, and so well known, that they passed into a proverb. He was a poet; and as to his philosophy, we can affirm nothing certain upon that subject, as the ancients have represented it different ways. What is most probable is, that his opinions were that philosophy might be instituted in two methods, one conformable to the changeable nature of matter, the other in adhering strictly to the unalterable nature of things. The first method is uncertain, and may be called natural philosophy; the other is invariable, and is metaphysics. The first principle of all things is simple, immoveable, immutable, eternal, and spherical. This alone deserves the name of *being*; all the rest may be stiled *non-entities*. In this system God is said to be the informing principle of the universe; a fire, which, in the Pythagorean sense, is diffused through all, and animates all. His physical system established heat and cold, that is to say fire and earth, as the principles of all things. Plato adopted the greatest part of these systems, but with several alterations of his own.

MELISSUS, of Samos, acquitted himself in the government of his country with reputation. He also maintained the unity of all things, as well as

the infinity, eternity, and immutability of its first principles.

ZENO, of Elea, the disciple and adopted son of Parmenides, underwent many unjust and tyrannical persecutions, which however he surmounted by his constancy. He laboured with great earnestness to introduce the argumentative method into philosophy, and for this purpose taught logic. His metaphysics were the same as those held by the rest of the Eleatic sect. He held but one God, infinite, eternal, and immoveable. Both place and motion were things that existed no where. There were many worlds; and there was no vacuum. Let us go on to the natural philosophers.

LEUCIPPUS, the disciple of Zeno and Melissus, gave birth to a new kind of physics, generally called the Atomistical philosophy; which was afterwards brought to perfection by Democritus, but particularly by Epicurus. The universe, according to him, is infinite, but partly a plenum, and partly a void. The plenum is an assemblage of an infinite number of corpuscles or atoms, which in the infinite void become the infinite elements of things. These elements, endued with all possible kinds of figure, and detached from the total mass of infinity, are carried into the void, where they unite and form a vortex, the agitations of which cause the corpuscles to approach in such a manner as that things of the same kind mutually tend to and unite with each other. The corpuscles most disengaged from the

rest tend to disperse themselves into the immensity of the void ; but the rest unite, assume figure, and when covered by a skin became bodies, the totality of which forms a world like ours.

DEMOCRITUS, of Abdera, was a man of excellent talents. Having returned to his native country after a voyage of several years, he gave himself up entirely to the contemplation of nature. His retreat from mankind has given cause to a variety of fables, which are propagated concerning him. It is said among the rest that he blinded himself by looking upon a bright brazen bowl, that he laughed continually, that he found out the philosopher's stone, that his countrymen brought Hippocrates to visit him in order to cure him of the madness with which they fancied him possessed, that he was profoundly versed in magic ; with other puerilities of the like nature, which nothing but the grossest ignorance could have given rise to. What may be said for certain concerning this philosopher is, that he perfected the system of Leucippus, and made use of the assistance of logic in his reasonings. He maintained that truth was only founded in the principles of things, and that whatever was but the quality or affection of body was merely unessential. He still held to the physical principles of Leucippus, according to whom there are no other beings except atoms. These being peculiarly endowed with solidity, he held to be infinite, and destitute of all qualities whatsoever, except weight, fire, and fi-



gure. However, being whirled by a rapid motion, the parts of one stick into the corresponding cavities of the other, and thus unite into masses. All the differences of things, and in particular all their sensible qualities, arise entirely from the figure and arrangement of these atoms. There are an infinite number of worlds, but without souls. The soul of man is a fire. The end of all things is a tranquillity of spirit, *εὐθυμία*.

PROTAGORAS, also of Abdera, the disciple of Democritus, expressed himself with peculiar eloquence. Having been accused of impiety, he was banished all Attica, and was drowned in the sea. A tenet peculiar to him was, that matter is in a perpetual agitation, tossed between two opposite directions.

DIAGORAS, of Melos, and Anaxarchus, who from being the servant of Democritus became his disciple, were both branded with the infamy of atheism by antiquity. The latter was one of those who shared in the favours of Alexander the Great. His end was peculiarly tragical: having the misfortune to fall into the hands of the enemy, they pounded him alive in a mortar.

SUCH was the Eleatic sect, which derived this appellation from Elea, a city in Magna Grecia, where the laws of Pythagoras had been received. Parmenides, Zeno, and Leucippus, the most celebrated philosophers of this sect, were natives of that city, which served to confirm the name, and con-

tinue it to their disciples. The metaphysics of this sect had much the appearance of subtlety, and even of genius; it could be very well maintained in argument, but it is very far from satisfying those who only aspire after a knowledge of the truth. Quite contradictory to the information of our senses, it made man a being almost at variance with himself, and thus sapped all the foundations of natural knowledge. Leucippus was aware of these inconveniences, and supposed he could avoid them by having recourse to the simple hypothesis of one of his predecessors, who divided matter into very small particles, which he adopted and improved, by explaining the manner how these particles came to acquire motion and adherence. He afterwards found that this external cause, which he brought to explain his phenomenon, was uncertain and precarious, and therefore rejected it; 'till at length, disgusted with metaphysical hypothesis, he attempted to reduce all things to the principles of mechanism, and gave an imaginary solution of all appearances from the arrangement and figure of his particles. He preserved, however, that unity of all, which was the foundation of the opinions of the Eleatic sect, but he placed it in his atoms. He maintained that a void was a non-entity, and asserted that all objects of sense arose from the union and combination of atoms. By this means he gave natural philosophy a more simple aspect, and also a greater air of probability.

*Of the SECT of HERACLITUS.*

HERACLITUS was an Ephesian. He was the scholar of Xenophanes and Hippasus. He was of a grave and melancholy disposition; and, what is usually a symptom of this turn of temper, he was excessively haughty. He lived in solitude, fed upon fruits and plants, and died of a dropsy. He studiously affected obscurity in his writings, and from thence obtained the name of the Dark, an epithet he seemed to desire. He only allowed reason to be a judge of truth, not permitting the senses any right in such disquisitions. Beside this, he divided reason into divine and common, and restrained the evident knowledge of things to the former alone. He established fire as the first principle from whence all things were made, and he represented this fire as diffused through all things by the finest and most imperceptible ramifications. He established an internal cause of things which gives motion to all. He granted that the union of certain bodies produced fire; but this he would not allow to be that which he called *elementary*. He supposed two worlds, the one eternal, the other created. The fire which existed in the former was the divinity or fate; in other words, an intellectual substance which served as the soul of the world. Among the particles of matter there was a continual opposition of motion, and a kind of war which was the cause of the changes; to which the elements were

subject. But in explaining the manner in which these changes were produced, he had recourse to a twofold progress; the *superior* and the *inferior*, which, as far as we are able to gather at present, meant no more than this. The elements of things were united at first into masses by a *coalescence*, or *constipation*, of elementary fire; those particles which were most entangled sunk downwards with an inferior progress; and those particles that were least engaged among the rest rose on high by the superior road. Fire began the work of creation by boiling the water, and reducing it to vapour; from whence all bodies derived their original, the stars being produced by the purest vapours. Even the soul itself was made from the evaporations of humidity; and thus its matter continually ascending and surrounding the bodies of men, enters by the channel of their organs, and continues there in continual agitation. As to the practical parts of morals, Heraclitus affirmed, that man's chief happiness consisted in pursuing what he had an inclination to; that life or death were equally indifferent things; and that in the passage from one to the other, men only changed one state for that which was its opposite.

*Of the EPICUREAN PHILOSOPHY.*

EPICURUS was an Athenian. The earlier parts of his life were spent in different countries. At a proper age, however, he became the auditor of



Nausiphanes a Pythagorean philosopher; but he did not confine himself to the lessons of his master alone; he soon began to think for himself, embellished philosophy with many ingenious opinions, and became the leader of one of its most considerable sects. He opened a school first at Lampascus, and afterwards at Athens, where he had a great concourse of scholars, not only from the different parts of Greece, but even from the remotest parts of Asia. The manners of the Greeks were at that time extremely corrupt, and this had raised the indignation of several philosophers; particularly the Stoics and Cynics, who rebuked vice with the utmost austerity, and dressed up wisdom in a garb too frightful to allure a people declining fast into effeminacy. Epicurus justly considered, that a very different method was to be followed, if a philosopher seriously designed a reformation. He, therefore, concealed his wisdom under the alluring name of pleasure, and gave his lectures in an agreeable garden. He taught that philosophy which tended to regulate the passions by tranquillity, which rendered the body capable of bearing the assaults of pain; and he shewed that nature could be content with a little. We at once perceive that these precepts were more adapted to man's nature than those of the other sects; and this gave them a popularity which was highly displeasing to the Cynics and Stoics, who made pretences to the most austere virtue. Several accusations were preferred against

him, and calumnies propagated, as if his doctrines tended only to conduct men to the most brutal pleasures. His disciples in fact contributed to give ground to these reproaches by departing from the frugality of their master; inasmuch that *a swine of the herd of Epicurus* was often a reproach against them not without reason. We ought, therefore, to use great precaution in judging of the doctrines of this philosopher, and not confound them with the gross pollutions which were blended by his followers. Whoever would thoroughly comprehend it, should never lose sight of his design in first instituting it, which was to oppose the vain subtleties of other sects, and to shew how little their speculations contributed to promote the happiness of mankind, or their own. It was this which induced him to dissuade his young disciples from the study of grammar, rhetoric, and poetry; such as they were taught at that period. In paying more regard to the testimony of our senses, and the operations of body upon body, he was willing thus to avoid the vain subtleties in which the Pyrrhonians and Stoics were immersed; the former in aiming to destroy all knowledge whatsoever; the latter in deceiving their hearers with false and exaggerated opinions of rectitude, which were incapable of being put into practice, or of influencing the mind.

EPICURUS had instituted a sort of community among his disciples, but without requiring them to give up their private property. The bond of this

community was friendship, and this tie was so powerful, that his school continued for a long time after him, and still preserved the highest veneration for his memory. There are some letters and apothegms belonging to that society, which have reached our times.

To give a more precise idea of his philosophy, he divided it into *canonical* and physical. The first comprehended the rules which were to be followed in our judging of truth. The principal of these were, that the senses do never deceive us; that appearances are the faithful representation of things; and all falsehood consists in the mind; that *anticipation* is the principle of demonstration, and that this *anticipation* comes from the senses; in short, that, in morals, the pleasure or the pain which things are apt to produce should be the guide to determine us in our choice of them. Epicurus required that we should make use of common and intelligible terms. With regard to natural philosophy, however, he was attached to the system of Leucippus and Democritus; affirming, that the universe always existed; that it was composed of matter and a void, without any third being intervening; that it is infinite, and formed of an assemblage of parts, perfectly simple and indivisible, immutable, solid, but no way differing from each other in size, or weight; that they are moved by their own weight, and that of repercussion; that angular, and as it were hooked, atoms mutually

insert themselves into each other; that those which are round operate by their own force; that all the changes which happen in nature are the result of the place which these atoms occupy, and that in this place consists fate or destiny; that figures of bodies depend upon those of the atoms, and their mobility upon the weight of the same; that all generation is produced by the different combination of these atoms, as they are united from the void; and that death is no more than their separation. He inferred from thence, that the world had no necessity of being created by a divine power, and that Providence is no way concerned in its regulation, since the fortuitous concurrence of nature is sufficient to answer all those purposes. However, he acknowledged that there were Gods, but then he affirmed that they were only taken up in the enjoyment of their own happiness, without troubling themselves with the concerns of humanity; and for this reason he placed them amidst the void spaces which intervene between the different worlds. He made pleasure the chief object of human happiness, and the end for which man was created; and this pleasure he asserted to consist in an exemption from pain, from whence resulted a perfect tranquillity both of mind and body, and in this alone consisted real happiness. The means which he pointed out as conducive to this state were prudence, temperance, fortitude, and justice; virtues, which gave birth



to all others, and in whose union consisted perfect happiness.

*Of the PYRRHONIAN or SCEPTIC PHILOSOPHY.*

PYRRHO, of Elea, was the disciple of Anaxarchus, and accompanied him in his travels to the Indies. He is said to have lived a solitary life. As he doubted, or affected to doubt, of all things, he attempted to avoid no danger, and was affected by no pain. He discharged the duties of the high-priesthood, in his own country, and opened a school, in which he was succeeded by Timon, of Phliasia, famous for being a philosopher and a satyrist. His sect seemed for a while to be extinct; but Ptolemy, of Cyrene, and Heraclides, who were his disciples, revived it, and made it subsist for some time.

PYRRHONISM, properly speaking, is rather a collection of extravagancies than a system. Every attempt to establish it by reason is an actual demolition of the whole. Of this any may be convinced who will be at the pains of reading the voluminous writings of Sextus Empiricus, which are the magazine of ancient Pyrrhonism; or the works of Bayle, who is considered as the chief Sceptic among the moderns, and whose works are infinitely the most dangerous of the two. When the Pyrrhonists were not upon the defensive, they attacked all other sects with great vigour, and threw doubts into every scientific subject. Their great principle was, that there was no proof, however strong, to which an-

other might not have been opposed of equal force. In one respect the disciples were more sensible than their master; for they maintained that mankind should be ruled by appearances, and that it was best to follow the common road of life. This doctrine at once blots out all traces of knowledge from the human mind, and proves the torment of him who entertains it. It must be granted, however, that men have thrown themselves into this extremity only to avoid another, namely, the insolence of those sectaries who pretended to decide upon all things with a magisterial air. The study of subtilities, too minute, or too remote for the understanding to comprehend, had involved the sophists in disputes without end and their arguments led them rather into obscurity than conviction. Thus the Pyrrhonists, though they mistook their way, had nevertheless a reasonable object in view, which was to cut short their fatiguing controversies and disquisitions, and to arrive at once at that indifference in which most sects placed their happiness. Finding therefor, in the false assertions of other philosophers, ample room for confutation and ridicule, they indulged their vein of satire; and some of them, it must be allowed, were very subtle and severe critics. Timon signalized himself in this species of ill natured science, and some of his writings were held in high estimation. Pyrrhonism was but in little esteem 'till about the times of the Roman

emperors, when it began to flourish, and made a considerable figure, as we shall see hereafter.

§ 3. *Of the PHILOSOPHY of GREECE properly so called.*

WE may consider the Ionic sect in itself, and in the school of Socrates, which proceeded from it.

*Of the IONIC SECT.*

THIS sect had Thales for its founder. Thales was the first of the Greeks who gave philosophy a systematical form, and who undertook to deduce truth from certain and obvious principles. It is to be regretted that there remain but very imperfect memorials of the Ionic philosophy; the writings of its professors having not reached to our times, and Socrates, the most celebrated of this school, having taken no care to preserve the opinions of it. This great man abandoned the physical part of this philosophy, in order to turn himself entirely to the moral part; thus, as he used to express it, making philosophy descend from the heavens to the earth. All, therefore, that can be said concerning this ancient sect is merely conjectural. What seems most certain is, that all their enquiries were directed to an investigation of nature, which procured this sect the peculiar appellation of naturalists, as excelling in that part of knowledge. With respect to politics and morality, they had only an *exoteric* doctrine conceived in the most laconic terms, and for

his skill in these it was that Thales was numbered among the seven sages of Greece.

THE ancestors of Thales were Phœnicians. He was born at Miletum, a city of Ionia, and lived with Thrasylbulus, from whom he received an excellent education, which early qualified him for the affairs of government. He rose by degrees to be at the head of the republic of Miletum, and was equally remarkable for the wisdom as well as the justice of his administration. He was initiated in Crete in the mysterious doctrines of that place, and there learned all the secrets of theogony. He travelled into Egypt, though now advanced in years, and from thence brought home that knowledge which he went in quest of, and which he contributed to embellish by his natural powers. Upon his return he was held in great esteem through all Greece, which he contributed not a little to humanize and refine. He took little care of the management of his domestic concerns, leaving them to his family. He died aged ninety, without having left any written work behind him.

HIS opinions concerning God and the world were as follow. Water is the first principle of all corporeal things, and all things will finally be resolved into it. By water he only understood the first matter or chaos of the ancients. He admitted only one world, and regarded it as the work of God, whom he considered as the soul of the world. Hence he was led to affirm, that all things were filled with



the divinity; that the world was animated; that nothing was hidden from God; that God is the most ancient of all beings; that the world was made by him, and depends upon destiny, which is no other than the immutable will of Providence; that it is contained in a place, and that this place is its soul, and that consequently there is no vacuum or void. He asserted, that matter in its own nature was changeable, and in a perpetual flux; that it cannot be divided ad infinitum, but that we must stop where infinity begins; that night preceded the day; that all compositions were made out of the four elements; that the stars are worlds on fire; that the moon receives its light from the sun; that there is but one luminary of this kind, and that its figure is circular. He allowed of spirits or dæmons, which were intelligent and immortal substances. He was of opinion, that the soul separated from the body after death, that it is always in motion, and that things which are inanimate have a kind of torpid soul. He cultivated the mathematics, and made some discoveries in them. He brought the astronomy of Egypt into Greece, divided the heavens into zones, marked the revolutions of the sun, and foretold eclipses. For many of these discoveries he was indebted only to his own sagacity. The principal successors of Thales in the Ionic school were as follow.

**ANAXIMANDER**, of Miletum, was the first who publicly taught philosophy, and wrote upon phi-

## PHILOSOPHY, &c.

losophical subjects. He carried his researches into nature very far for the time in which he lived: he is even said to have foretold an earthquake. It is also pretended that he first described the circumference of the sea and earth. He taught, that infinity of things was the principal and universal element; that this infinite always preserved its unity, but that its parts underwent changes; that all things came from it; and that all were about to return into it. According to all appearance, he meant by this obscure and indeterminate principle the chaos of the other philosophers. He asserted, that there are an infinity of worlds: that the stars are composed of air and fire, which are carried in their spheres; and that these spheres are gods; and that the earth is placed in the midst of the universe, as in a common center. He added, that infinite worlds were the product of infinity, and that corruption proceeded from separation.

ANAXIMENES, also of Miletum, was the disciple of Anaximander, and diffused some degree of light upon the obscurity of his master's system. He made the first principle of things to consist in the air, which he considered as immense or infinite, and to which he ascribed a perpetual motion. He asserted that all things which proceeded from it were definite and circumscribed, and that this air therefor was God, since the divine power resided in it, and agitated it. Coldness and moisture, heat and mo-

tion, rendered it visible, and dressed it in different forms, according to the different degrees of its condensation. All the elements thus proceed from heat and cold. The earth was, in his opinion, one continued flat surface.

ANAXAGORAS, the disciple of Anaximenes, was of Clazomene. He gave up his patrimony, to be more at leisure for the study of philosophy. He went first to Athens, and there taught eloquence; after which, having put himself under the tuition of Anaximenes, he gave lessons in philosophy in the same city. These he only gave to some particular friends and disciples, and with extreme caution. This, however, did not prevent, but, rather, was the cause of, his being accused of impiety, and thrown into prison, notwithstanding the credit and influence of Pericles, who was his disciple and intimate. Having been condemned to exile, he calmly yielded to the efforts of envy, and opened school at Lampsacum, where he was extremely honoured during the remainder of his life, and still more after his death, having had statues erected to his memory. He is said to have made some predictions relative to the phenomena of nature, upon which he wrote some treatises. His principal tenets may be reduced to these following. All things were in the beginning confusedly placed together, without order and without motion. The principle of things is at the same time one and multiplex, which obtained the name of *homœmeries*, or similar particles,

deprived of life. But there is beside this, from all eternity, another principle, namely an infinite and incorporeal spirit, who gave these particles a motion; in virtue of which, such as are homogeneous united, and such as were heterogeneous separated, according to their different kinds. In this manner all things being put into motion by the spirit, and similar things being united to such as were similar, such as had a circular motion produced heavenly bodies, the lighter particles ascended, those which were heavy descended. The rocks of the earth, being drawn up by the force of the air, took fire, and became stars, beneath which the sun and moon took their stations. Thus he did not look upon the stars as divinities. He asserted that snow was black, &c. It is here proper to remark in what manner Anaxagoras differed from Thales and his other predecessors. These had not, indeed, excluded a God from the universe, but they buried him in matter, and confounded their idea of him in such a manner with the operations of nature, that they allowed him no power in their direction. Anaxagoras, on the other hand, distinguished God from matter, and made him a separate principle, which he supposed to act upon matter, but not to reside in it. In this manner the system of emanations gave place to the system of duality, or of two principles; and God was considered as the master of matter, arranging it, and governing it at his pleasure. It was this doctrine that gave Anaxago-



was the surname of Genius. He deserved it for more reasons than one, and perhaps he was one of the most admirable men of antiquity.

DIOTENES, of Apollonia, the disciple of Anaximenes, filled the chair of the Ionic school after Anaxagoras. He was an expert philosopher, and an eloquent orator. He admitted the air also as the first principle of things, but added that this air had need of a divine power, to animate its matter into motion. In virtue of this power the air was said to be in continual motion. There existed an infinity of worlds. The earth was of an oval figure; the stars were exhalations which were formed by the perspiration of the universe; animals were produced without life, and received their soul through their lungs by inspiration.

ARCHELAUS, the disciple of Anaxagoras, did not depart much from the opinions of his master. He taught that there was a double principle of all things, namely the *expansion* and *condensation* of the air, which he regarded as infinite. Heat, according to him, was in continual motion. Cold was ever at rest. The earth, which was placed in the midst of the universe, had no motion. It originally resembled a wet marsh, but was afterwards dried up, and its figure he said resembled that of an egg. Animals were produced from the heat of the earth, and even men were formed in the same manner. All animals have a soul, which was born with them; but the capacities of which vary

according to the structure of the organs of the body in which it resides.

*The SCHOOL of SOCRATES.*

THIS is a memorable period in the history of philosophy, one of the most considerable revolutions in the system of human intellect. It seems as if Providence had in some measure raised Socrates to give men a glimmering of that light which was afterwards to shine with more amazing lustre in the doctrines of revelation.

THIS great philosopher found the sciences reduced to the most frivolous subtleties, which brought them into contempt, and hastened their decline. The love of pleasure was then the sole motive to action, and the Greeks lived to sensual enjoyments. Socrates readily saw that philosophy, as it was then taught, could have little influence in producing a reformation in manners, as it could scarcely give any real light to the mind. This induced him to abandon entirely the study of nature, in order to give himself up to that of morals, and to labour in the improvement of mankind with all the powers of his understanding. He was successful in his attempts: he surpassed, not only all the philosophers who went before him, but even those who succeeded. He was still the more praise-worthy, as he joined to the greatest talents the greatest modesty, ever acknowledging the contracted limits of the hu-

man mind, and asserting that he knew only one thing, which was, that he knew nothing.

SOCRATES was born in Athens: he was the son of a statuary, from whom he learned the art; but he did not follow the employment, at least he devoted the greatest part of his time to study and meditation, or to conversing with such as took a pleasure in hearing him, and had sense enough to relish his fine understanding. He began his studies by instructing himself in all that was then known in philosophy; and a rich citizen, whose name was Crito, furnished the expences of his study. He was in particular the auditor of Anaxagoras and Archelaus, and he went as far into every science then known as it was possible to go. Having enrolled himself as a soldier, pursuant to the laws of his country, he exhibited a degree of valour which astonished his fellow soldiers; and he had the good fortune to save the life of Xenophon, when just sinking under the weight of numbers. Being more advanced in life, he was enrolled into the senate, and opposed the designs of the thirty tyrants with invincible courage. He used to boast of being assisted by a *genius* upon these occasions; nor is there any great reason to condemn his boast, since it is probable he only meant the force of his own natural *genius*. His extraordinary virtues, his temperance, justice, and piety, (if we may allow this virtue to one who professed heathenism) these I say excited against him the envy of the sophists, which he did

not a little contribute to encrease by his keen satire and just reproaches. His enemies, therefor, informed against him as a corrupter of youth, and a despiser of the gods. He was cast into prison, and sentenced to die by poison. This sentence, however, was universally disclaimed by the other cities of Greece, and nothing could equal the regret which they felt at his loss.

THE philosophy of Socrates, as we have already observed, was equally distant from the vain curiosity of the naturalists of his time, and the ridiculous ostentation of the sophists: it wholly turned upon the influencing men's lives, and improving their morals. He did not open a school, but gave his lectures wheresoever he went. He was possessed of a most admirable art in disguising the drift of his argument, and concealing what he aimed at, until his antagonist had gone too far to recede. He used for this purpose a chain of questions, and allowed inductions, from which he drew undeniable consequences; and this was called the Socratic method of disputation. Irony was his favourite figure, and he perfectly understood the use of it. As he wrote no books, it is by means of his disciples that his philosophy has been transmitted to us: nor have they escaped without contamination, especially those delivered by Plato, who continually blends them with the opinions of Pythagoras, Heraclitus, and Parmenides.

To be more explicit with regard to the opinions



of Socrates, he asserted that God, though invisible, might be known by a consideration of his works; that it was he who made the universe by his power, and supports it by his providence; that he is the cause of all alterations which are seen; that he takes care of men, and all other beings; that he knows all our actions, punishes the evil and rewards the good. The soul of man, according to him, had something in it of the divinity; God had deigned to give man a soul capable of knowing its creator, of obeying his will and of rising to the most sublime conceptions. He was of opinion, that this soul was immortal, that upon leaving the body it returned into heaven, which was open to receive it. Upon this strong foundation he erected morals, in directing men to regulate their appetites according to their idea of Providence, and with hopes of a rewarding immortality. He placed all real good in science, but by this he only understood the science of conducting life with wisdom, as man ought to be led to acquire knowledge only to correct his will. In this he made virtue to consist, and in this also he placed all pleasure, making what was just and what was useful only one thing, and placing all tranquillity of mind in the practice of our duty. He taught, that we could arrive at this perfection only by a careful communication with our own hearts, and that the study of ourselves conducted at once to wisdom and to virtue, which were but different appellations of the same thing. As to the worship

of the gods. he made that chiefly consist in an obedience to their will. He asserted, that there were divine laws written in the human breast, but that we were to conform to those of our country; that we were to make a reasonable use of riches; that unrestrained passions were the pests of a state; that agriculture ought to be encouraged with particular attention; that nothing is really useful but that of which we are capable of making a good use; that great precautions ought to be taken in the choice of a wife (which, however, he learned rather from experience than sagacity, his own wife being one of the worst;) that it was becoming women to keep the house. etc.

THE number of Socrates' disciples was very considerable. We may put, in the foremost rank of these, Critias, Alcibiades, and other young men of quality, who attended to his instructions. There were some others of a distinguished rank, but who did not found any sect. At the head of these was Xenophon, that excellent general, who commanded the Grecian troops in the army of Cyrus, and who conducted them in that memorable retreat, of which himself has left us an account. Xenophon was equally admirable in the arts of peace as well as in war, eloquent in the highest degree, as his writings which still subsist sufficiently prove. Of all the disciples of Socrates he seems to have collected his master's opinions with the greatest care, and published them with the most studious exactness. To this list

we may add Æschines, poor in fortune, but greatly loved by Socrates; Crito, the benefactor of our philosopher; Simon, by trade a tanner, but notwithstanding a philosopher; Cebes, the Theban, author of that moral allegory which bears his name; Timon, or the Misanthrope; and several others.

*Of the SECTS which have proceeded from the SOCRATIC SCHOOL.*

WE shall mention three principal sects: The CYRENAIC, the MEGARIC, and the ELIAC, or ERETRIAC.

*Of the CYRENAIC SECT.*

ARISTIPPUS, of Cyrene, was the founder of this. He left his native country to attend upon the instructions of Socrates, but he did not implicitly follow them, as he had a natural inclination for pomp, and a taste for pleasure, which his master vainly strove to reform. The word Pleasure was continually in his mouth, which procured him the professed enmity of the rest of his fellow-disciples. After having made a voyage into Persia, in which he suffered shipwreck, he went to reside at the court of Dionysius, the tyrant of Syracuse, where he led a life that no way spoke the philosopher. At length he once more returned to Athens, where his polished manners and agreeable conversation failed not to procure him friends and admirers.

WITH regard to his opinions; like Socrates, he

rejected the sciences as they were then taught, and pretended that logic alone was sufficient to teach truth, and fix its bounds. He asserted that pleasure and pain were the criterions by which we were to be determined; that these alone made up all our passions; that the first produced all the soft emotions, and the latter all the violent ones; that we ought to distinguish true and permanent pleasure from that which was transient and decaying; that although bodily pleasure be the true end of man, yet the soul should always preside over every corporeal appetite. The assemblage of all pleasure, he asserted, made true happiness, and that the best way to attain this was to enjoy the present moments; that the pleasures of the body were preferable to those of the mind; that pain is the greatest evil, for which nature testifies as great an abhorrence as she does a propensity to pleasure; that it is in every wise man's option whether he shall live or die; and that virtue is the source of pleasure.

ARETEA the daughter of Aristippus inherited the opinions and genius of her father. Her disciples were her son, who was called Aristippus, Theodorus, and Antipater of Cyrene, who, after having filled the chair of this school, left it to Epitimidés, and he to Paræbates.

HEGESIAS, who was the disciple of the philosopher last mentioned, signalized himself by the power of his eloquence, preaching up the advantages of death with such force that many of his scholars



actually killed themselves. He was with great justice forbid to teach publicly, since his doctrines were of such a dangerous tendency.

ANICERIS the younger was the disciple of Paræbates. He refined the doctrines of Aristippus in giving mental pleasures the preference to those which were merely sensual, and in persuading his auditors to seek for permanent happiness, rejecting that which was transient and produced only pain. He looked upon cheerfulness as one of the chief instruments of sweetening life; and in this he was just, as cheerfulness is almost ever the mark of a good heart and right understanding.

THEODORUS, branded with the odious surname of the *Atheist*, was the chief of a sect which bore his name. It appears, however, that his atheism only consisted in his attempting to give a physical explanation of the pagan mysteries and divinities. In general he loved to raise doubts, and multiply uncertainties. This caused him to be banished from Cyrene and Athens as a declared infidel. Having sought for an asylum at the court of Ptolomy, the son of Lagus, this prince condemned him to die by poison, which was the punishment prescribed by law for such as were found guilty of atheism; so dangerous was it to turn the superstitions of the Greeks into ridicule: yet for all this there were many philosophers who braved death rather than forego their desire of reformation. Of this number were Evemerus, and Bion, surnamed the Borysthe-

mite, one of great parts, but without religion. He was first a disciple of Crates and the Cynics at Athens; after which he studied under Theodorus, and lastly Theophrastus. His genius was rather subtle than solid, which led him into errors too common with such characters. He first began by irreligion, and ended by falling into the profoundest superstitions.

*Of the MEGARIC or ERISTIC SECT.*

THE Megaric sect had the name of Eristic or contentious from the asperity with which they treated all such as happened to oppose the opinions of Socrates whom they professed to reverence. Though the principle of this zeal was laudable, yet it carried them too far. It led them into vain disputes, which Socrates himself would have avoided; and they, in some measure, injured this method, by composing treatises by way of question and answer, which was not the intention of this philosopher himself when he first used this method of instruction. From hence also these philosophers were called the Dialectic Sect.

EUCLID, of Megara, was its founder. He was at once both subtle and severe. The writings of Parmenides, and Zeno, of Elea, in some measure, gave him a wrong turn, as they led him to controversy and contentious dispute. Having after this attached himself to Socrates, the ardour of his disposition was so much encreased that he would not

have scrupled to die for his opinions. It was from this disposition that after the death of his master he was seen to maintain his character with so much acrimony as to deserve the name of a contentious disputant. Being entirely taken up with the frivolous questions of the Eleatic sect, he carried this disposition to the bar, and opened a disputing school in his native city. He enriched logic with many new methods of argumentation, if that can be called enriching a science, which only served to confound it.

EUBULEDES, of Miletum, was one of the adversaries of Aristotle. He made himself famous by inventing several sophisms, the very name of which are sufficient to demonstrate their futility; such as the *veiled*, the *bald*, or the *horned* sophism, etc. The Stoics, however, afterwards turned these trifles to their advantage, and appropriated the whole of these absurdities to themselves.

CLINOMACHUS was the first who wrote upon axioms.

ALEXINUS was called Elevoxinus, as being insatiable in disputation, attacking, in some measure, all he met in order to satisfy this desire. He was a very vain man.

EUPHANTES and Apollonius Coronus are scarcely known except by name.

DIODORUS Cronus was a powerful dialectician, and perfectly understood the art of lengthening out a dispute. He spent his whole life in this strange

employment, and communicated his talent to his five daughters. He reasoned also upon natural subjects, and admitted atoms of an infinite, or, at least, an indefinite minuteness.

STILPO of Megara is the most famous philosopher which came from this school. He was possessed of a fine understanding, and acquired great reputation, which his virtues still further contributed to encrease. He was a favourite of Ptolemy Soter. Notwithstanding the character of his sect, in private life he was upright and inoffensive: his eloquence and erudition contributed not a little to encrease the lustre of his sect. He is said to have overthrown the doctrine of universals. He was also famous for his writings. He had a son named Bryson, who was the master of Pyrrho mentioned before.

*Of the ELIAC or ERETRIAC SECT.*

PHOEDO, of Elis, was its founder, and gave it the first of its two names. It can scarce be called a sect without impropriety. It was rather a school in which they confined themselves to teach the doctrine of Socrates. To Phædo succeeded Plistanus, and to him

MENEDEMUS, the Eretrian, who transferred the school to the city of Eretrian, the place of his birth, and this gave occasion to the second name which this sect obtained. Menedemus was the disciple of Plato, of Xenocrates, of Paræbates, and of Stilpo.



Being raised to the government of his country, he discharged the duties of his post with honour: however he died of displeasure at an insult that was offered him. He was a fierce disputer, yet nevertheless an agreeable companion, who took a peculiar pleasure in treating his friends with the feasts rather of reason than of sense. After his death he was honoured with a statue. He spent almost his whole life in the company of Asclepiades who was his companion both in his good and bad fortune. As all the Eristic philosophers were desirous of distinguishing themselves by something new, he is said to have banished ridicule from argumentation.

*Of the SCHOOL of PLATO, or the ACADEMIC SECT.*

ALTHOUGH the sect of Plato was not only derived from the school of Socrates, but the members of it were even professedly the collectors of his opinions, yet, as it hath held such a distinguished rank in the history of philosophy, it is with justice honoured with a separate title.

PLATO was an Athenian. It is said, that in his very infancy, he gave marks of his future eloquence and wisdom. While yet but a youth he had great success in poetry; he composed tragedies, understood music, and was one of the most distinguished auditors of Socrates. Having made himself master of the opinions of Heraclitus and Parmenides, he has blended them with the rest of his philosophy.

After the death of his master he went over into Italy, to attend the lectures of the Pythagorean philosophers, from whom he received instructions in physics and metaphysics. From thence he went into Egypt. It has been reported also that he went into Palestine; but this is a falsehood, as he seemed entirely unacquainted with the Jewish learning. Upon his return he still availed himself of the instructions of Eurytus and Archytas; and he also made a purchase of the books of the Pythagorean philosophers, particularly those of Timeus. So many masters rendered him a syncretist; that is, they made him of all sects without attaching him to any; and this is the reason that his writings seem to contain no fixed opinions. When settled at home he began to make choice of a place of exercise, situate in one of the suburbs of the city of Athens, and there he opened a school, where he taught philosophy by the dialogistic method, previously requiring his pupils to go through a course of mathematics. He had an incredible number of hearers, among whom were several young men of quality, and even some celebrated courtisans. This philosopher has been equally the object of the highest applause and the most virulent censure. There was scarcely any subject that he did not touch upon; among others, he even undertook to trace out the plan of a republic, in which he introduced many schemes that may be considered as the effects of a bold, if not a chimerical, imagination. Dion

having recommended him to Dionysius, of Syracuse, he made three voyages to the court of that prince, where he was held in great estimation. In the last of these he was taken by pirates, and sold for a slave. Upon his return to Athens, he died on the day on which he was born, aged eighty-one, having thus arrived at his great climacteric year. The style of his writings is held as the model of elegance, and seems a species of composition between prose and poetry. He always made use of dialogue. He availed himself much of the opinions of the philosophers who went before him; but at the same time he ascribed to them many things which they would not have avowed.

THE philosophy of Plato in general has been very much celebrated; but there are several causes which render it difficult, and in some places even unintelligible. The twofold method which this philosopher made use of may be reckoned to contribute to this; as also that figurative and poetic style which he always used: besides those, the subtlety of the dialectic, which involved all subjects in doubt and incertitude; his abstracted physical ideas which he always makes use of as real existences; the extraneous and mutilated opinions of other philosophers, which he has united with his own; but particularly that syncretism which he ever aims at, in which he endeavours to reconcile all, even the incompatible opinions of former philosophers, and to blend them into one system, such as those of

Socrates, Pythagoras, Heraclitus, Parmenides, and the Eristic sect. It was in order to attain this end that he made those alterations in the dogmas of every sect, mangling them in such a manner as to adopt them more easily to his scheme, and thus depriving us of the knowledge of the true state of ancient philosophy. The numerous schools which have taken rise from his, under the name of academies, have only served to encrease our embarrassment; but of all inventors of absurdity, perhaps those of the Platonists, who have written since the birth of our Saviour, are the most complete. They have scarce found any thing either praise-worthy, or reasonable, in the doctrines of their master, that they did not attempt to deface.

As far as we are able at this period to give a sketch of Platonic philosophy in its original, the following may serve. Plato proposed as an object of philosophical research, on one hand, things which in their own nature existed, that is, *intelligible* things; and, on the other, things which have a reference to civil life, and which he called *active* things. He divided philosophy into three parts, namely, *dialectic*, *contemplative*, and *active*. In the first he taught, that our knowledge of truth is not to be obtained by the senses, but that the soul alone is the proper judge; that it can consider things that are constant, and such as are transient; that science, or knowledge, springs from the former, and opinion, or probability, from the latter. He af-



firmed, that memory was only a chain of sensations; that the soul is originally a blank page, destitute of all marks whatsoever; that it exercised its intellectual functions long before its entrance into the body; and that all the ideas it seems to acquire when united to the body, are but remembrances. Ideas were, according to him, the first intelligible things, and were afterwards imprinted upon matter, but existed before it. He admitted a practical judgment. In theology he began by establishing two causes; one by which all things exist, and another from which they proceed. God is the former; matter the latter. This last furnishes the materials, of which the body is formed. It is possessed of a passive and irregular force, by which it is agitated in different directions; and this is the cause that God has been prevented from subjecting it entirely, and from forming it into the best possible system. However, God is the author and source of all things, to be regarded as a being incorporeal, incorruptible, endued with reason, liberty and foreknowledge, and as the arranger and controller of matter. The principal stress of the Platonic philosophy was laid upon the consideration of ideas, by which Plato understood intelligible beings, subsisting by themselves, and the source of all other essences. These ideas, or beings, existed primarily in the divine mind, and were themselves so many divinities; and it is the duty of man to contemplate and desire them. Next to God, and the divine intellect, Plato formed still

a third principle, namely the soul of the world. He asserted, that she was an emanation from the reason of God, and inferior to him; that she was composed of a divisible and an indivisible matter; and that, on entering into matter, she there became the principle of life in all created beings. He added to this, that there were eternal Gods, and others created; that the latter were co-eval with the soul of the world, and that they were entrusted with the care of presiding over the formation of animals, and in the government of the different parts of the world; that they were the interpreters of the divine will; and that the world was filled with them. Passing from thence to the works of nature, Plato was of opinion, that the world was perfectly beautiful, that it had existed from eternity, and that it was a huge animated being. The fire and the earth were first created, after which air and water were placed between them. As the world was built upon a geometrical plan, he supposed that it would last for ever. As to the soul of man, she was separate from the soul of the world, and consequently of a divine nature, but then in an inferior degree, and with a mixture of matter, of which she is partly composed. According to this system, man is furnished with two souls; one reasonable and immortal, the other destitute of reason, and ungifted with the privilege of immortality. As to the *active* philosophy mentioned above, Plato distinguished it into *moral* and *civil*, establishing both the one

and the other upon a knowledge of ideas. He constituted the sovereign good in the knowing what was good, and he made reason the judge in our chusing it. He asserted, that virtue was beautiful, and should be followed for herself alone; and that the end of all active science is to grow into a resemblance of the deity, by prudence, justice, piety, and temperance; that death delivers the soul from the prison of the body: and lastly, with regard to states, he asserted that they should be governed by philosophy. There is a great sublimity in many of these notions, but some of them are purely visionary, and the great fault of his system consists in the little connexion between its parts.

*Of the ACADEMIES that succeeded the SCHOOL  
of PLATO.*

THE first academy bears the name of the ancient school, and in this the doctrines of Plato were taught in all their purity. Speusippus filled the chair immediately after the great academists. He was a man of wit, of a mild and agreeable temper, deeply versed in the Pythagorean philosophy, and an adopter of many of its tenets. He was succeeded by Xenocrates of Chalcedon, whose genius, though at first it appeared contracted and harsh, ripened by degrees into excellence; insomuch that this philosopher is esteemed one of the greatest ornaments of the academy. His aspect was serious and even forbidding; he was a declared enemy to vice, and

carried the austerity of his virtues to an extreme height. He wrote several books in mathematics which had merit. He left the chair to Polemon, the first part of whose life being begun in debauch, did not prevent him from dedicating the latter part of it to philosophy, virtue, and solitude. He held the subtleties of dialectics in great contempt. Crates succeeded him; and to him Crantor, whose name is famous as a moralist.

THE second academy, which is called the middle school, was founded by Arcefilaus, who was in the beginning attached to Theophrastus the peripatetic, but whom he quitted in order to follow Crantor. He was a man of great erudition, and well versed in the writings of the ancients. He was remarkable for the severity of his criticisms; but nevertheless he knew how to accommodate himself to the age, and pursue the allurements of pleasure. He had a great number of disciples. His doctrines were different in several respects from those of the ancient school; and perhaps he was led into this diversity of opinions by many capital errors in the ancient school; such as the incredible arrogance of the dogmatists, who pretended to assign causes for all things; the mysterious air they had thrown upon the doctrine of ideas; the entirely discarding the testimony of the senses; the objections of the Pyrrhonists, who now began to broach their opinions; the powerful opposition of the Stoics and Peripatetics, who discovered the feeble parts of the



academic philosophy. These might have given cause to reform the ancient school, and to found a new one.

THE middle school, therefor, laid it down as a principle, that we could know nothing, nor even assure ourselves of the certainty of this position; from whence they inferred, that we should affirm nothing, but always suspend our judgment. They advanced, that a philosopher was able to dispute upon every subject, and bring conviction with him, even upon contrary sides of the same question; for there are always reasons of equal force both in the affirmative and negative of every argument. According to this doctrine, neither our senses, nor even our reason are to have any credit, and therefor, in common affairs, we were to conform ourselves to received opinions. Arcefilaus was succeeded by his disciple Lacydes.

THE new academy was founded by Carneades of Cyrene, the disciple of Egefinus of Pergamus. This philosopher joined to great natural talents the most indefatigable application, and arrived at great fame. He was particularly admired for his eloquence at Rome. He was a professed enemy of the Stoics, and managed his disputes with them in a manner equally forcible and expert. He, like his predecessors, made some alterations in the tenets of the academy. He maintained, that we have no means by which to distinguish the truth, and that even the most evident appearances may lead us into error;

however, that it was best to follow the greatest degree of probability, which was sufficient for all the useful purposes of life. He therefor permitted men to make use of all means to attain happiness that seemed most likely to conduct them to it. The difference, therefor, between the opinion of Carneades and Arcesilaus consists only in this, they were both agreed in the imbecillity of the human understanding; but the first permitted men to make use of probabilities in the pursuit of happiness, the other denied these are any way serviceable in such a design. Carneades granted the wise man opinion, though he denied him certainty, and left him rules for his conduct in the attainment of felicity.

CLITOMACHUS the Carthaginian was his successor; who, however, did not follow his master implicitly, but took whatever he thought right from the other sects. He governed the academy for thirty years, both by his lectures and his writings.

HIS disciple Philo of Larissa was the author of the fourth academy. He was extremely eloquent, and of a penetrating genius. He asserted, that with respect to our confined faculties, things are not certain to us; but that with respect to their own nature, they are certainly existent.

THERE was even a fifth academy, which owed its foundation to Antiochus of Ascalon, the disciple of Philo of Larissa. Instead of attacking other sects, Antiochus set himself down to reconcile them toge-

ther; particularly the sect of the Stoics with that of the ancient academy.

*Of the SCHOOL of ARISTOTLE, or the SECT of PERIPATETICS.*

ARISTOTLE, born at Stagyræ, though of Greek extraction, had as much reputation as a philosopher could have, and none merited it better. He early learned all that could contribute to form or embellish his understanding; and, not confining himself to philosophy alone, he addicted himself to the politer studies, and became excellent both as a poet and a rhetorician. Travelling to Athens, he there became the auditor of Plato, and was greatly esteemed by his master, with whom he spent twenty years of his life. After Plato's death, he went to reside at the court of Hermias, the tyrant of Atarnum, whose widow he espoused. His reputation every day encreasing, Philip, king of Macedon, offered him the charge of the education of his son Alexander, afterwards surnamed the Great. Aristotle accepted the offer, and acquitted himself admirably in his employment, which procured him the favour both of the king himself and of the queen Olympias. After this, he accompanied Alexander in his expedition into Asia, and was enriched by the bounties of this magnanimous prince; but upon a coolness between them some time after he returned to Athens. Here he founded a new school in that place of exercise which was called the Lyceum, and

there taught, according to the custom long established, a public and a secret doctrine. As he gave his lectures walking along among his auditors, his sect assumed the name of Peripatetics. Being accused of impiety he retired with his disciples to Chalcis, where he died.

THE history of his life has been disfigured by calumnies which were the invention of his enemies. He was, without doubt, a most extraordinary man, possessed of great excellencies, and great defects. His followers have praised his erudition rather too highly: it is sufficient to say, that it was as extensive as the state of knowledge then permitted it to be. Though raised above his contemporaries by his merit, yet he was not free from envy, a vice of the lowest nature. He has left many writings, but, the fate of his works has been very peculiar, and had no influence upon philosophy in general. The preservation of his writings first fell to the charge of Theophrastus; from him they passed into the hands of Neleus, of Scepsa, who sold a part of them to Ptolomy Philadelphus. This prince having placed them in the library of Alexandria, they were consumed when that glorious fabric was set on fire by the Saracens. The heirs of Neleus had hidden the remainder of his works in a subterranean cavern, where they continued for 130 years, though, as it may be supposed, not without great damage. They were taken however, from thence, and sold to Appelicon, of Teya, who finding them



in great disorder, and some parts of them lost, arranged and added to them as he thought proper. Sylla carried them to Rome, where Tyrannion still farther corrected them. In this manner, passing from hand to hand, the works of Aristotle have greatly suffered from the ignorance, or the inaccuracy of transcribers. This has given birth to much obscurity, and to omissions that are now irreparable: it is this which has rendered the sense of Aristotle so doubtful, and opened such a wide field for the combats of scholastic philosophy. Besides, our philosopher was not himself very much inclined to be perfectly plain and familiar. His style was difficult and concise. He has employed a mathematical manner of communication; often uses terms which have no determinate meaning; and, with many of his doctrines, he mixes antient opinions as taken for granted, which are altogether false or uncertain. In a word, the Peripatetic philosophy is very obscure in itself, and commentators have rather contributed to encrease the obscurity. From the death of its author in the first century of the christian æra, this philosophy was but little regarded; but by degrees it began to rise into repute, and at length arrived to such a pitch of unbounded sway, that it even seemed to dictate with a tyrannical assertion, rather than enlighten by the methods of conviction.

THE principal aim of Aristotle was to raise a new system of natural philosophy upon the ruins of all

the rest, and to throw new lights upon the subject. As to his treatises in morality, they were merely adapted to the manners of a court. He divided philosophy into two parts, one *theoretical*, the other *practical*, to which he subjoined a third, which he called instrumental. He taught a twofold logic: the first the *analytic*, the other the *dialectic*, parts of this art, granting the former the power of producing knowlege, the latter, only probability. In pursuance of this he made demonstration to consist in a syllogistical analysis, composed of propositions or enunciations which were themselves composed of simple terms. He distinguished *terms* or *themes* into such as were *homonymous*, *synonymous*, and *paronymous*. In the first class he allowed ten predicaments, and shewed the parts of every proposition, which were the *subject*, the *predicate*, and the *copula*. He then determined the three different methods by which these might be converted into opposites, contraries, and contradictories. He exactly shewed the force of the three terms which went towards the conformation of the syllogism, and the three figures to which they may be reduced. He lastly asserted science was founded on the reason of things, whereas captious sophisms only led to error.

His natural philosophy is replete with terms of science. He places the principles of things in that natural opposition which results from habitudes and privations. The three things of which he asserts all others are composed, are matter, form, and pri-

vation. Actual existences are formed by power; matter could not have been created, but all things proceed from it. There are four causes; the material cause, *ex qua*; the formal cause, *per quam*; the efficient cause, *a qua*; and the final cause, *propter quam*. Nature never acts without a design; motion is the act of power, it exists actually; place is the surface of the contained body; there is no vacuum; time is the measure of motion, measured either backwards or forewards; as motion is finite, there must necessarily be an infinite mover who is himself immoveable, and this is God.

THE ideas of Aristotle concerning the soul were truly enigmatical. He called it the *Entelechia* of the organized body, and asserted, that it had no motion in itself. He granted three faculties, which he called the nutritive, sensitive, and reasonable. He acknowledged, however, a communication of sentiment, and an immortality of the active intellect.

IN his metaphysics he ascended to a self-existent being, and affirmed, that accidental qualities could give us no knowledge of it. The first matter of things according to him cannot be separated from form, and this form it is which we are accustomed to consider as the only real existence. There are *intentional* beings, or such as have had existence only in idea. The motion of beings necessarily implies that there must be some being without motion. This first mover gives motion to inferior intelligences, and determines

them to actuate their particular spheres. These intelligences are immaterial, and the only Gods.

THE morality of this philosopher is divided into *ethical*, *economical*, and *political*. Happiness consists in the analogy of the functions of the soul with virtue, and by the exercise of these functions we arrive at the summum bonum. Virtue is a habit founded upon choice, and consists in keeping an even mean between two extremes; there are theoretical and practical virtues; of the latter there are eleven, and of the former five. The object of prudence is the government of a state, and the strict regulation of private œconomy.

THEOPHRASTUS, the Eresian, was the immediate successor of Aristotle, and governed the Lyceum with great reputation, having near two thousand disciples. He was a man of comprehensive talents and of great eloquence. These qualities acquired him the favour of many kings and princes. He composed many important works, and enriched the doctrines of his master in several respects.

AFTER him came Strato, of Lamsachus, the Corypheus of the Peripatetics, who, from the object of his principal study, was called the naturalist. He asserted, that all the divine power was in nature alone, and that there was no necessity of having recourse to the Gods in the formation of an universe. The peripatetic school was afterwards governed by Lycon, by Oriston, by Chio, by Crito.



laus, and others whom it would be superfluous particularly to mention.

*Of the CYNIC SECT.*

THE name of this sect, which seems obviously derived from a Greek word signifying a dog, is held by some as reproachful; however, there are others who derive the name of the sect from the place where their first lectures was given, which was called *Cynosarge*. Which ever of these is the true etymology, it is certain that the first Cynics were persons highly respectable for the purity of their morals, and the austerity of their lives. Cloathed only in a coarse cloak, fed with fruits, and drinking only water, they laid down as a fundamental maxim, that man was only made to be virtuous, and by being virtuous to be happy, at which happiness he might arrive by a careful inspection into himself. In consequence of these principles, they were taught to regard all things, which were neither virtuous nor vicious, as absolutely indifferent in their own nature; and from this they drew a conclusion, that dress, or decency of apparel, was totally to be despised. By this means, all the effects of their doctrine were, in some measure, impaired. Instead of inspiring others with a contempt for pleasure, they only became themselves the objects of contempt and detestation. Upon seeing their austerities, the spectator was usually led to consider the virtue they

boasted as something severe, painful, morose, and even ridiculously impossible to be strictly obeyed. All the admirers of the fine arts were strongly against them; all those whose luxuries, whose pride or dissipation they had condemned, retaliated with united force, and repaid them with scorn and public laughter. Notwithstanding all this there were Cynics who forced themselves into reputation, and, with all the appearance of things against them, were capable of inspiring esteem. In a continuance of time, however, when the sect degenerated, and its professors were only remarkable for impudence and extravagance, they were treated as *dogs* in reality, and perhaps they deserved it. There are many falsehoods propagated concerning this sect, against which the reader should be upon his guard.

ANTISTHENES was the chief of the Cynics. He was an Athenian, and passed the former part of his life as a soldier. Having afterwards been an attendant at the lectures of Socrates, he was principally charmed with those exhortations of that great philosopher, which persuaded to frugality, to temperance, and to moderation: these Antisthenes was resolved to practise by carrying every precept to its utmost extent. Permitting therefor his beard to grow, he went about the streets in a thread-bare coat, scarcely to be distinguished from a common beggar. He prided himself upon the most rigid virtue, and thought himself obliged to attack the

vicious wherever he found them. This gave him some reputation in the city; but it may be supposed that, in a place so very luxurious as Athens, he had more enemies than disciples. His philosophy consisted rather in action than speculation: it was therefor his constant maxim, that to be virtuous was to be happy, and that all virtue consisted in action; that the wise man should live for himself, content in all situations, and happy alone in the consciousness of his own virtue. He acknowledged nothing to be good but what was honourable: and asserted, that virtue might be acquired by practice.

OF all the rest of this sect there is but one more who deserves particular mention, and this is the famous Diogenes, a native of Sinope, and said to be banished from thence as a coiner of false money. It was with great reluctance that Antisthenes admitted him among the number of his disciples; but was at length overcome by the assiduity and intrepidity of his new convert. Diogenes entirely laid aside all external ornaments, living wherever he could, and upon whatever he could find, sitting in the public places, carrying only with him his staff and his wallet, and declaiming against vice, and the vicious, with unrestrained severity. Having been made a slave in his old age, he was carried to Corinth, where he died in the house of his master Xenocrates. It is said, that he pronounced a philosophical discourse, in the solemn assembly of the Greeks, upon the Cynic philosophy. There are

many childish stories imputed to him, and even envy seems to have invented charges against him too scandalous for any credit. His chief disciples were Moniorus and Crates, whose wife Hipparchia also professed the same principles. It was impossible that a sect of this kind could long subsist. It seemed to be one of those fallies of the human mind which have but a short continuance; whereas the Epicurean philosophy is grounded in our most favourite passions and appetites; hence it is that the latter is dangerous, while the Cynic philosophy is only ridiculous.

*Of the STOIC SECT.*

ZENO, a native of Cyprus, was its founder. Arriving, when young, at Athens to study philosophy, he followed Crates, the Cynic, for some time; but he could not approve the filthiness of his master's habit, nor the contempt he shewed for all the sciences. This led him to attend the lectures of Xenocrates, Stilpo, and Polemon. Having afterwards conceived a design of composing a new school himself, he fixed upon a place, from the name of which the sect was afterwards denominated. Although he abandoned the Cynic sect, yet he retained all their severity of manners, and was attended by a numerous concourse of disciples. He composed many works, and died in an advanced age.

THE system of Zeno was almost entirely taken



from the opinions of Pythagoras, Heraclitus, and Plato: these he endeavoured to refine by the subtleties of the Megaric school, and adopted the morality of the Cynics. His principal intention was to oppose his new system to those of Arcefilaus, Carneades, and particularly of Epicurus; which, in succeeding times, produced the greatest animosity, and almost an implacable hatred between the two sects. The melancholy disposition of Zeno first led him into the paradox which he taught, and which his future disciples supported with an obstinacy that was rather the effect of pride than real conviction.

THE logic of the Stoics was perfectly embarrassing; it was rather the art of endless disputation, and maintaining contradictions, than of investigating truth. It was divided into rhetoric and dialectic. They laid down two foundations upon which all knowledge was supported, the outward impression of objects, and the internal sensation. The former only depends upon the fortuitous circumstances of things; the latter, as it is seated in the mind, is the criterion of truth. Mental comprehension, therefore, is the science of real existence, whether it arises from intuition, from reasoning, or from demonstration. From hence proceeds the assent given by the mind to the evidences of things. We have no innate ideas: they are all acquired by the senses. These and many other subtleties, which it would be superfluous to mention, were warmly maintained amongst them.

As to their natural philosophy, they supposed that in the beginning a chaos existed impregnated with seminal reasons, which being arranged and disposed, the universe or nature was produced. This universe is but one, say they; but it contains two principles, one an efficient principle, which is God; the other a passive principle, which is matter. God is a fire or a pure ether; he inhabits the circumference of heaven, and as opposed to matter, is to be considered as a spirit, eternal, incorruptible, good, and endued with foresight in consequence of his intimate connection with all parts of the universe. From hence proceeds destiny which governs the world, and to which all things are subject, not of their own desire, but by virtue of an internal necessity in their nature; from whence it may be inferred that there is an immutable law, which is nothing more than the natural order and chain of causes. Dæmons and souls are particles of, and emanations from, the divinity. The world is an animal. The sun consists of a very pure fire, and is fed like the stars by vapours. The world is to be consumed by a general conflagration.

THE Stoics have derived their greatest reputation from their morality. In fact, it had a very imposing aspect; but when more closely examined, it was found to be ill founded, and even dangerous in practice. They taught that the true end of man consisted in living in a manner conformable to nature, and that each should obey his internal moni-

tor, that particle of the divinity which constitutes the soul. Good is what conducts men to perfect happiness: all good things are equal. The passions arise from false judgments in the mind; and duty consists in a knowledge of truth, and in conformity to nature. Virtue is a disposition of the soul agreeable to life. There are four cardinal virtues which cannot be separated from each other; and there is no mediocrity, between vice and virtue. Their commentaries and further divisions of this subject would lead us into tedious disquisitions to very little purpose.

ZENO had many successors; the most celebrated of whom were Perseus, Aristo of Chio, who made great alterations in the stoical system, Henillus, Spærus, Cleanthes who lived in poverty, Chrysippus, the most famous of the sect and a great logician, Zeno of Tarsus, and Diogenes of Apollonia.

THUS having taken a survey of the Greek philosophy, we may here observe, that the conquests of Alexander served to diffuse these systems through different parts of the world. This prince, who subdued so many nations, particularly Egypt and the greatest part of Asia, was himself a scholar of Aristotle, as we have already observed, and always had some Greek philosophers in his train. By their means, philosophy extended its limits, and the conquered insensibly adopted the opinions as well as the manners of their conquerors. Alexander's plan was to form the whole known world into

one empire, which he was to guide. It was about this time that the oriental theology of the Persians and Brachmans, particularly that of Zoroaster, was blended with the mythology and theogony of the Greeks: the old doctrine of emanations was thus revived in an oriental habit. The progress of this doctrine was no where more rapid than in Egypt, from its similitude to that which they formerly cultivated. The Pythagorean and Platonic philosophy took deep root in this country under the government of the Ptolomies, and even the Peripatetic and Stoic philosophy had some partisans. In a word, all Egypt became as it were a colony of Greece under these Grecian kings. The ideas of religion, which 'till then were prevalent among them, were in a manner intirely obliterated, and the Grecian mythology prevailed, or at least was intimately blended with the former. This new doctrine it is usual to ascribe to Hermes. It came into very high reputation; and, about the times of the first Roman emperors, it was considered as the most sublime and solid wisdom that was then in being.



## BOOK II.

*Containing the HISTORY of PHILOSOPHY from the Foundation of Rome to the Re-establishment of Letters.*

IN this department we may consider the efforts of, I. The Gentiles; II. The Jews; III. The Saracens; IV. The Christians.

ARTICLE I. *Of the PHILOSOPHY of the GENTILES.*

THESE are divided into I. Romans; and 2. Asiatics.

§ I *Of the PHILOSOPHY of the ROMANS.*

WE shall first speak of the times prior to the age of Augustus; and secondly, of those which followed it.

*Of the TIMES preceding the Reign of AUGUSTUS.*

THE dawnings of philosophy among the first Romans were glimmering and faint. It is generally known in what manner Rome was founded, and what was the spirit of its government in earlier ages. It was a state purely military, which knew no other

art but that of war; nor any other pleasure than that of victory. We are not to expect, therefore, to find any ray of philosophy, either under the kings or the consuls of these first periods. They not only neglected this study, but were even taught to fly from it as only tending to render the manners more effeminate, and repress courage. Thus we see the reason why the philosophers whom the Greeks sent to Rome were quickly dismissed, and the senate soon after gave orders that neither philosophers nor rhetoricians should abide in Rome. However, in succeeding times, young men of distinction, who were employed in the armies which were sent to Greece, usually attended the lectures of the philosophers of that country; and becoming admirers of philosophy, introduced it into their own. Of this number, among others, were Scipio Africanus, and Lælius Furius, who were declared abettors of Stoicism. Several expert lawyers, such as Quintus Tubero, Quintus Mucius Scævola, and others, followed their example. Lucullus, one of the richest and most magnificent lords of Rome, became the disciple of Antiochus, of Ascalon. From about this time, particularly from the dictatorship of Sylla, the philosophy of the Greeks was known and esteemed by the Romans. Tyrannion, who published the works of Aristotle, did not a little contribute to this taste for Grecian erudition among them.

THE principal sects which were followed in this capital of the world were:

1. THE Pythagorean. Pythagoras had a statue erected to his memory at Rome for many ages. Ennius has transcribed in his works some fragments of his *exoteric* philosophy. In the times of Cicero, Stigidius Figulus, famous for his skill in divination, proposed several solutions of the appearances of nature from the philosophy of Pythagoras. But this system was not long followed.

2. THE Academic sect had better fortune. The antient school had for its followers Marcus Brutus, the great admirer of Plato, and who also adopted the syncretic opinions of Antiochus; as also Terentius Varro, the most complete scholar that Rome ever produced. Marcus Piso was a disciple of the latter; but he was still more honoured in being the master of Marcus Tullius Cicero, who was also instructed by Philo of Larissa, Diodorus the Stoic, Antiochus the Academic, and Possidonius. This illustrious Roman was particularly eminent at the bar; though he did not confine his talents to that employment only, but during the troubles of the republic, addicted himself to the study of philosophy; and his writings on this subject are, perhaps, the most precious bequest we have received from antiquity. He has the merit of having first introduced into the Roman language several philosophical terms and modes of expression that were before known only to the Greeks; and also of giving us a faithful exposition of the opinions of the principal sects that flourished before him. He chiefly inclined to the

middle academy, and pursuing the steps of Carneades, he admitted only probabilities. However, he has treated on the duties of mankind in the manner of the Stoics.

3. The Stoic sect, to which persons of distinction and lawyers chiefly addicted themselves. Among the Stoics, Q. Lucilius Balbus, and Cato Uticensis, that martyr to the republic, who chose death rather than sue for mercy, were the most famous. It was rather by the strictness of their morals, and the rigidity of their virtue, than their lectures, that this sect propagated its doctrines.

4. THE Peripatetic sect. This sect, which for a while was obscure, received new lustre upon the discovering the works of Aristotle, and of Theophrastus, of whose works Andronicus Rhodius made a collection, and added commentaries of his own. The principal patrons of this philosophy at Rome were Cato, Crassus, and Piso.

5. THE Epicurean sect was greatly followed; and among the number of its partizans we find, Torquatus, Vellerius, Trebatius, Papirius, Pætus, Venius, Albutius, Piso, Fabius, and Pomponius Atticus. The opinions of Epicurus in natural philosophy were embellished with all the ornaments of poetry by Lucretius, one of the greatest poets of antiquity.

6. Lastly, the Pyrronic sect was received, but without any great success, at Rome; it even seemed



quite extinguished until Renedefirnus revived it at Alexandria.

*Of the TIMES succeeding the Reign of AUGUS-*

*TUS.*

AUGUSTUS, having overcome all his competitors to the empire, enjoyed it for more than half a century; and the sciences flourished under the influence of his favour. All who had either erudition or genius enjoyed his protection. He even honoured those who were distinguished for their reach of thought, or sublimity of conception, with his friendship and familiarity; and had a particular affection for the professors of philosophy, in which he himself had made some proficiency. The poetry, therefor, of the times was embellished with the fashionable opinions of philosophy. Virgil and Horace adopted the doctrines of Epicurus; Ovid gave an abstract of the philosophy of Pythagoras; Manilius, Lucan, and Persius gave into the opinions of Zeno and the Stoics. The historians themselves have not been blind to the charms of philosophy, as may be seen in the works of Livy and Strabo. As to the great, they were of opinion, that nothing could so much exalt their character as a rigid profession of Stoicism; but after the times of Augustus and Tiberius the throne was filled by men, not only unworthy to reign, but to live; enemies not only of philosophy, but of all mankind. Such were Caligula, Claudius, Nero, and Domitian. Their

successors Trajan, Adrian, and the Antonini, re-kindled its faded lustre; and in this state it remained under the reigns of Severus, Alexander, and Gordian.

THE principal sects, which were in fashion during the period of which we are speaking, were,

I. THE Pythagorean. Among others professing it, we find Anaxalaus, of Larissa, who addicted himself entirely to the contemplation of nature, and is said to have excelled in magic, which induced Augustus to banish him out of Italy. Sextus, an illustrious Roman, being deeply affected with the deplorable circumstances of his country, embraced the most formidable austerities, and was the founder of a sect, the rigour of which none but men of the utmost resolution could sustain. His doctrines were secret; but many of the opinions of Pythagoras were said to be blended among them; however the strictness of discipline, which this philosophy required, soon put it out of repute, and it remains wholly unknown, except a few sayings ascribed to Sextus. Sotion, the master of Seneca, united Stoicism and Pythagorism into one system. Apollonius, of Tyanea, was not a little spoken of; some have even had the assurance to put his miracles in competition with those of Christ; but Philostratus, who has made the attempt, has only filled his work with fable and palpable absurdity. Apollonius was a bold and artful impostor; he ran through the principal countries of Europe, Asia, and Afri

ca, and died at Ephesus; but the manner of his death is wholly unknown. As he was once haranguing the people in a public assembly, he stopt short all of a sudden, and cried out, *Courage, Stephanes! strike the tyrant!* and immediately after a short pause, *The tyrant is dead.* It was afterwards found that Stephanes had, at this instant of time, stabbed Domitian, who had long insulted the earth with impunity. His philosophy, which he expressed in short sentences, was a vile collection of idolatry and pantheism. Moderatus, of Gades, or Cadiz as it is now called, collected and published various fragments of the philosophy of Pythagoras. Secundus endeavoured to distinguish himself, by keeping for life that silence which the Pythagorean sect prescribed. His answers to the emperor Adrian, however, did him more real honour. Nichomachus was a mathematician. The sect of Pythagoras is that which of all others has fallen into the most irretrievable obscurity; without doubt, because its principal mysteries were kept concealed, and the rest did not seem worth preserving. We may only observe, that those philosophers, who latterly adopted the doctrines of Pythagoras, enriched them with opinions taken from other systems of philosophy, particularly from Platonism.

2. THE Platonic sect. We must take care not to confound this with the Academic. The latter having obtained great credit, particularly after that air of scepticism was softened, which it at first bore,

was at length entirely abandoned under the emperors; and Phavorinus is the only person we find who adhered to it with singular attachment. In the Platonism of these times may be observed several vestiges of the first and third schools; but even these greatly over-run with Syncretism, borrowed from the Stoical and other sects.

THRASYLLUS may be put at the head of the Platonists of this age. He lived under Augustus and Tiberius, and was a man of profound knowledge; but made peculiar boasts of understanding astrology, which gained him great reputation with Tiberius, who had a very strong attachment to this pretended science. He left treatises in astronomy and music. Theon, of Smyrna, made use of mathematics to explain the doctrines of Plato. Alcinous composed an excellent introduction to the Platonic philosophy. Taurus, of Berytum, gained great reputation in the reign of Antoninus Pius for the vigour with which he opposed that injudicious mixture of Platonic, Stoic, and Peripatetic philosophy, which was at that time usually practised. Apulius, well known by his romance of the golden ass, a rhetorician of Afric, versed in the religious secrets of the times, and otherwise of extensive literature. Atticus was the author of some books which, under the emperor Marcus Aurelius, were read in all the Platonic schools with great veneration, and which shewed the impossibility of reconciling Aristotle with Plato. Numenius distinguished



himself by uniting many of the opinions of Pythagoras with those of Plato. He it was who gave Plato the name of Moses the Attic, *Moses Atticifans*. Maximus Tyrius lived under the reign of Commodus. He was an elegant sophist, who at once united the arts of rhetoric and philosophy in his book of the doctrines of Plato, a work esteemed even at this day. We may also here add the names of Plutarch and Galen, two men of universal knowledge for the times in which they lived; but who were addicted to no peculiar sects, rather extracting what they thought good in each. Plutarch was the scholar of Animonius.

3. THE Eclectic sect: this was originally of Egypt. In this country they first began by molding the opinions of Pythagoras and Plato, so as to unite them with the Egyptian theology, and the doctrines of Zoroaster. This produced a new kind of philosophy, which at first received the name of Platonism; but which was in fact only an ill-connected combination of different opinions, systems, and religions; by which it was intended to form such a sect as would embrace all others; and at the same time to give a greater sanction to their attempts, they pretended to their secret doctrines as other sects had done. All the Greeks, who have given us an account of this sect, made it principally to consist in Pythagorism and Platonism. It was particularly at Alexandria that this ill-formed system grew up, under the auspices of Antioclus, of Ascalon, who gave

lectures in the academic school. At first it scarce had the name of a sect; but after a time, when both the christians and Pagans began to see the folly of philosophical disputes, and to despise the profession of every sect, this seemed to rise upon the ruins of all philosophy.

THE first who reduced this system into order was Potamon, of Alexandria, who lived towards the end of the second century, and who, in his choice of different systems, chiefly held to that of Plato. His attempts, however, produced no great effect. Ammonius Saccas who lived at the beginning of the third century, and who, from being a christian, apostatized to paganism, resolved to try another method. He borrowed many of the principal truths of christianity as they were taught in the catechetic school of Alexandria, and made a most shameful mixture of these with Platonic errors, and Egyptian superstition, thus hoping to reconcile the christians and Pagans to the same opinions. He also had recourse to what he thought good in other systems, and vainly hoped to blend the disagreeing parts of all into one uniform whole. He had many disciples, as well among the gentiles as christians. Plotinus is the most celebrated among the former; and Origen, Adamantius, and Herennius among the latter.

PLOTINUS contributed more than any other to the propagation of the Eletic sect. He was born in Egypt, and naturally of a gloomy habit of mind.

After having been the hearer of many philosophers, and among others of Potamon, he at length gave himself up to the guidance of Ammonius; after which, being enlisted into the army of Gordian, he travelled into Persia, and there was instructed in the philosophy of the East. Returning to Rome, he taught the doctrines of Ammonius, but with the utmost precautions and reserve, because of the oath of secrecy which was previously to be taken. However, his disciples were not so secret as he, but divulged the doctrines which they had learnt, so that he was at last induced to open a public school, where he taught in the most open manner. He even attempted to compose a body which might give a complete view of his philosophy; though in this he acquitted himself but indifferently, and Porphyry was afterwards obliged to give it a polishing. Among the number of the disciples of Plotinus, there were even several ladies. He was greatly respected, and enjoyed great authority. He never indulged himself with eating animal food, and lived in the most abstemious manner. He died in Campania with the same degree of enthusiasm in which he lived. There are few men who indulge a greater variety of superstitions than he: a complete fanatic, he boasted his extacies, and by those flights raised admiration in such minds as resembled his own. His writings are perfectly obscure.

AMONG the chief of his disciples we find Amelius Gentilianus, no less a fanatic than his master; and

Porphry, who afterwards became the bulwark of the sect. This was in reality a man of great learning, of the most refined education, and perfectly skilled in all the knowlege of the times. He was a Syrian by extraction, and his real name was Malchus. He received from Origin the first tincture of letters; he afterwards added to his improvements by the lectures of Longinus, the celebrated rhetorician, and finished his studies under Plotinus, who filled his mind with the superstitions we have seen. He was animated with the most perfect dislike to christianity, and was the last, whose argumentative efforts were levelled at the destruction of this holy religion. As to his philosophy, what we find in his writings is merely taken indiscriminately from all former systems; but his erudition throws a pleasing air over the whole, and constitutes the principal merit of his works. He died at the beginning of the fourth century, highly celebrated for his talents and learning.

JAMBlicus, the disciple of Porphyry, became, after him and Plotinus, the third supporter of the sect, and did not fall short of his predecessors in enthusiasm. As he was deeply skilled in pagan theology, he passed for a worker of miracles, or a least had art enough to deceive the people who gave him the surname of the *most divine*. He was otherwise a person of excellent talents, and did not a little avail himself of the instructions of Porphyry. He was master of all the mathematical and literary



knowledge that was then known, but wanted judgment, as may be readily seen from the number of trifles and falsehoods with which the works he has left are replete.

THE school of Jamblicus underwent very severe treatment when Constantine the Great undertook to abolish paganism; for the heads of this school were at once priests and professors of philosophy. Julian, the apostate, gave new life to this sect, and may himself be ranked among the number of those philosophers whose writings encreased its reputation. Under his reign we find Aedesius, Eustathius, Sopatra, Eusebius of Mynd, Priscus, and above all, Maximus of Ephesus. Hierocles lived in a latter period, at Alexandria; but confined himself wholly to philosophical studies, without touching upon religion. The liberality of the emperors Adrian, Marcus Aurelius, and the Antonini, supported professors at Athens, who publicly taught this philosophy. After the incursions of the Goths, Plutarch, the disciple of Nestorius, gave refuge to this philosophy, and pretended to great power, as well in magic as theurgy; in both which he instructed his daughter Asclepigenia, and his son Hierius. He was succeeded in the philosophical chair by Syrianus; after whom came Proclus, the most famous of this sect for his time, and in reality a man of great knowledge and penetration. He was born at Bizantium, learned the Peripatetic philosophy under Olympiodorus, and afterwards improved in the Ec-

lectic under Plutarch and Serianus. He was also well versed in what were called the Chaldean arts. Though possessed of most extensive erudition, he had but little judgment. His disciples Marinus, Isidorus, and Damascius, continued to support the succession of those reputedly sacred opinions. We may add to the number of the sect Hypasia, that most learned lady, who was killed at Alexandria by an insurrection of the christians. There were several others who gave splendor to this sect, whom, however, we shall omit mentioning.

If we would now consider the genius and nature of this sect, we shall find that it was chiefly confined to the country which first give it birth, and that it was only a mixture of all those religions with which Egypt was at that time replete. What gave Electic philosophy its greatest force were, the shameful and almost uninterrupted disputes of the philosophers, who, by these means, rendered themselves in the end entirely despicable, and unable to resist either the Christians or the Sceptics who opposed them. It was, therefor, thought the wisest way to unite, into one system, all that was best, either in the systems or the religions that were at that time known. Platonism, and the doctrines of Pythagoras, were conceived to be the properest foundation for such an universal undertaking, as they best served to support religion. Afterwards, by strained interpretations, the doctrines of Aristotle were brought to correspond; and, in short, some-

thing was borrowed from the opinions of every religion, and every sect. This, as may be supposed, produced the most extreme confusion, and was consequently the fitter to produce the extravagancies of enthusiasm. The professors therefor spoke of nothing but visions, of a commerce with the divinity, and of miracles wrought either by magic or theurgic powers. To all this they joined the oriental doctrines of Zoroaster, as it furnished sublime language concerning religion. Christianity having also at this time an extensive spread, they resolved to adopt whatever it produced in morals that tended to make men better. Thus this re-establishment, this pretended purification of philosophy produced in fact its greatest depravation. What is most displeasing at this day is, that the followers of this sect being desirous of uniting all other systems to their own, they have so much disguised the opinions of former philosophers, that they are now perfectly unintelligible. The Jewish and Christian religions also suffered much under the hands of these pretended improvers; they brought in to them, as far as they were able, that confusion, which, on one hand, gave birth to so many heresies that were so prejudicial to the church; and on the other those superstitions which called for a late reformation.

AFTER these observations, it would be difficult to enter into a detail of the particular dogmas of this sect, as it is made up of a variety of discordant, and even contradictory parts. Its principal objects

were the metaphysical doctrines of God, spirits, demons, the soul and the world. It gave also some lectures upon morals. The expressions of Plato were almost constantly employed in the discussion of these subjects, but with a very different meaning from what they had in the original.

ALTHOUGH the Eclectic sect took a new name, yet we must observe that the idea which gave rise to this name was not new. It was in general the way with the chiefs of sects to unite with their own opinions those of such other philosophers as seemed to them nearest the truth; but what the Eclectic sectaries chiefly differed in from others was their profession of being swayed by no great names in their pursuit of philosophy, contrary to the custom of others who revered their peculiar master with the most blind veneration. However, they fell into an error perhaps worse than that they strove to avoid; their sect, instead of being a quintessence from the rest, was in fact a mixture of all their impurities; and perhaps nothing is more reproachful to philosophy in general than the follies and extravagancies of these, who sometimes also assumed the name of modern Platonists. The sect also had the appellation of Alexandrine from the city of Alexandria, where it first had its birth. Its progress was such, that in the end it swallowed up all other sects, and reigned alone from the third century to the seventh, that is, 'till about the entire extinction of paganism. The school of Plotinus gave it its great-



est lustre, and from it issued out a whole swarm of pretended philosophers who filled all Asia and Greece.

4. THE Peripatetic sect. They who interpreted the works of Aristotle in the beginning were faithful to their original, and clear in their expositions. Of this number were Sosigenes, an excellent mathematician, who corrected the calendar, Boetius, Nicholas of Damas, a person equally eloquent and learned, Xenarchus, Atheneus, and Alexander of Ægea. Ammonius who came after, as we have seen, endeavoured to alter the opinions of Aristotle; but in this he was opposed by Adrastus, Aristocles, Messenius, and particularly by Alexander Aphrodisæus, one of the principal supports of Peripatetic philosophy. There were also some Eleatics whom we may stile Peripatetics from their peculiar attachment to the works of Aristotle; such as Themistius, a man of great eloquence, Olympiodorus, Simplicius, Proclus, and others. We may assign three stages to this philosophy after the birth of Christ. The first extends from Andronicus to Ammonius, the master of Plutarch. During this time the Peripatetic doctrines remained uncorrupt, and the sect was distinct from all others. From the time of Ammonius, which is its second stage, it began to be corrupted by the Eleatic mixture, and only a few philosophers were attached to it in particular. Of those few was Alexander Aphrodisæus, as we have observed above. The third stage

was, when this philosophy was introduced into the christian schools, in which it was most miserably disfigured by the ignorance and designs of the schoolmen.

5. THE Cynic sect offers Musonius to our view, whom Nero sent into banishment for the boldness of his speech; Demetrius who became obnoxious to the same emperor from the same cause, and who is justly celebrated for the constancy with which he endured the torments which were inflicted on him by this tyrant; Demonax, who, of all the Cynics, exhibited a pattern of the most undeviating virtue, without any mixture of the vices of his sect, and who for this reason was highly esteemed by the Athenians; Crescens, that violent opposer of Christianity; and lastly, Peregrinus, who, having for a long time led a wandering life, disseminated many errors, ended his career by voluntarily burning himself alive in a public assembly of the Greeks.

THE government of the emperors, having relaxed the vigour of enquiry, destroyed all traces of ancient liberty, and formed all characters into servile obedience. The Cynic sect degenerated by degrees, and at length was totally extinguished. Those who still pretended to the title were in reality the most shameless beggars, who made philosophy a pretext to cover their impudence, sloth and extravagance. Their extreme gluttony rendered them parasites; and this is a vice of so low a nature, that it obliterates all esteem. But vile as these men were, they

who view things in a proper light must still preserve a just esteem for the doctrines they professed, and the virtues it was calculated to promote before it was corrupted in the sequel.

6. The Stoic sect produced very learned men. We shall mention in this place Athenodorus of Tarsus, whose justice so much attracted the esteem of Augustus; Cornutus, who was the master of Lucan and Persius; Caius Musonius Rufus, whom Vespasian so highly favoured; Chæremón the Egyptian, who acquired reputation by his sentences, and who was the preceptor of Nero; but particularly Seneca, who still more gloriously discharged this office, and who was the most celebrated philosopher of the sect. This great man having held a distinguished employment at court, and led a life of frugality in the midst of riot and excess, at length was obliged to die by the order of the tyrant his pupil. He only had his choice of the manner, and he was accordingly bled to death in a warm bath. Dion of Prusium, who from his eloquence was called Chrysoltemus, or the Golden Mouthed, was of the Stoic sect, but joined to his opinions the practical austerity of the Cynics. Euphrates commendable for his penetration and eloquence. Epictetus, who, though a slave, was nevertheless an admirable philosopher, and who ought to be preferred before all the rest, if we do justice to the austerity of his morals, and the integrity of his life. We cannot close this list more splendidly than with the emperor Marcus Au-

relius: this royal philosopher, who has left us such a precious monument of wisdom in his admirable reflections; and whose life, as well in a private as a public station, was but a lively portrait of his own maxims. The Stoic sect was thus, in some measure, the prevailing one under the emperors, who had for the most part Stoical preceptors. Added to this, the fundamentals of this doctrine agreed extremely well with the form of government. That ostentation of virtue which they professed procured them an admiration and respect which would probably have been refused, had their motives been better known, as pride and hypocrisy was the groundwork of their system. Many men, and even women of this sect, having preferred a voluntary death to the living under a tyrannical government, contributed to its reputation. Among the number of these suicides, Poetus and his wife Arria, Helvidius, and Fannia, are the most remarkable. Public stoical schools were therefor founded at Rome, Alexandria, and Athens; and Marcus Aurelius himself wore the pallium or habit of these philosophers. The Electic philosophy however which succeeded buried this sect as well as all others in its bosom, and it fell entirely into oblivion.

7. THE Epicurean philosophy supported itself for a long time from that intimate union there is between its precepts and men's inclinations. Its principal object was to combat all the reigning superstitions; and yet laudable as this motive was,



we find few men of great note among its followers. Pliny the elder, Lucian, and Diogenes Laertius, are said to have inclined to this sect of philosophy.

8. LASTLY, the Sceptic sect, which was but in little repute under the emperors; and therefore it sunk by degrees into a total extinction; while, on the contrary, the Dogmatists, being supported by the royal favour, were every day growing stronger. Physicians were chiefly addicted to the Sceptic sect; and one of this profession, named Sextus Empiricus, has left us the largest work concerning these doctrines that remains of antiquity upon the subject; and it may be considered as the magazine of antient Scepticism, as Bayle is of the modern.

§ 2. *Of the EASTERN PHILOSOPHY.*

WE may deduce this from the doctrines of Zoroaster, and from the Chaldean philosophy; of which we have already spoken. These opinions were honoured with the title of the Gnostic Wisdom in all the provinces of Asia Minor, and also in a part of Egypt: but we are to be upon our guard not to confound them with the opinions of the new Platonic philosophy, though there are many things similar between them; for the modern Platonists, in reality, drew many of their doctrines from an Eastern source. This philosophy in general was built upon the doctrine of emanations proceeding from the hidden abyss of divine light, and returning to it again. From the bosom of this eternal ocean,

said they, there proceeded *entes*, or beings, and substantial virtues, a certain number of which remained filled with the divine plentitude, while the rest degenerating formed the world; and continually departing from their original purity, have been obliged to submit to the guidance of tutelar angels. From hence moral and physical evil, and even matter itself, derive their original. The soul of man is continually struggling to get free from this heap of corruption to which it is united, and, in fact, will at length; and after divers purifications, return to that being from whence it issued: so that at last all things will rest in God.

ARTICLE II. *Of the PHILOSOPHY of the JEWS.*

**W**E will give the history of it first, and then its principal dogmas. Its history is divided into two periods; the former of which comprehends the times before the destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple; and the other that which succeeded this catastrophe.

§ I. *Of the TIMES antecedent to the Destruction of JERUSALEM and the TEMPLE.*

DIVINE revelations having ceased about the times of Esdras, the canon of the sacred books was then compiled; and they who were then at the head of affairs, either in the church or the state, only sought to maintain the republic against the assaults of tyrants, who endeavoured to persecute it

from without. The law, therefor, remained in its pristine purity; and if it received any interpretations, yet these were wholly unmixed with the philosophical errors that afterwards prevailed.

THE schism of the Samaritans followed after this. These schismatics pretended to reform the Jewish religion, and to purify it from all the adulterations it had received while the people were dispersed among the Gentiles. It was among the Samaritans that Simon Magus was born, who was at once a philosopher and an heretic, and who being initiated into the philosophy of the East, and arrogating a power of working miracles, pretended to be an *Ens* sent upon the earth to deliver it from misery.

AFTER the expedition of Cambyfes into Egypt, there were many Jews in that country who retired into solitude. Alexander the Great conducted a new colony of Jews to Alexandria, which flourished under the protection of the kings of Egypt, particularly Ptolomy the son of Lagus, and Ptolomy Philadelphus. Under the latter the sacred books of the Old Testament were translated in Greek; which translation now bears the name of the septuagint. These Jews during their residence in Egypt became instructed in the philosophy of the country as it was then received, which they laboured to accommodate to their own law by the assistance of allegorical explanations; and Aristobulus also added something of the Peripatetic doctrines to this ill-united system. This is the source of that mixture

of Pythagorean, Platonic, and oriental philosophy, which we find in the Jewish Cabbala. Such was the state of their philosophy in Egypt; but in Palestine, as we have already observed, the divine writings remained uncorrupted during the government of the kings of Syria; if we except a few errors borrowed from the Greeks. But Simon Shetachidus being recalled from Egypt, he first laid the foundation of the Cabbala, a secret doctrine, principally designed to stop the progress of the Greek philosophy among them. From thence also arose the different Jewish sects; and though the beginnings of each are perfectly obscure, yet it is evident enough that they all aimed at the same object, to unite the traditions of their doctors with the written law: hence arose that vain doctrine of works of supererogation, which one sect taught with great ostentation, and which another opposed with equal violence.

THE principal Jewish sects prior to the destruction of Jerusalem were:

I. THAT of the Sadducees which had for its author Antigonus Sochus. This doctor, despising the doctrine of supererogatory works, went into the opposite extreme, and taught that we were to serve God without any hopes of a recompence. Zadock and Baithofus, having mistook the sense of this assertion, denied the resurrection of the body, and all rewards after this life. The other parts of the Sadducean doctrines consisted in rejecting all unwritten



traditions, in asserting that there was no such thing as spirit disengaged from the body; and from hence attempting to prove that the soul could not subsist after death; and lastly, in denying that there was any such thing as a predetermination of fate, but that all things were in our power. Thus all the recompence of virtue, according to them, was paid us in this life alone.

THE sect of the Caraites. These were doctors who were for adhering literally to the scriptures without any allegorical interpretation. They allowed no other rule of faith but the scriptures, and taught only the doctrines which it contained; but in every other particular adhered to the principles of the Sadducees.

THE sect of the Pharisees. It takes its name from an Hebrew word which signifies separated or distinguished, as they pretended to be very distinct from the vulgar, as well in their superior knowledge (which consisted in false interpretations of scripture) as in their works, which were only ceremonious observances of superstitious traditions. They boasted much of the moral law, and pretended to be its guardians. The sect was principally maintained in the school of Hillel, and was in fact only vile hypocritical institutions that disgraced antiquity, and well worthy the anathemas pronounced against it by the Saviour of the world. Hyrcanus and Alexander, who were sensible of the dangerous tendency of their doctrines, endeavoured to destroy this sect;

but though they, in some measure, made it decline, yet it re-assumed its former vigour under Alexandra. The praises which the Pharisees bestowed on the moral law were exaggerated; and they deceived themselves in supposing that man could be justified in the perfect accomplishment of this law. They insisted upon a fate in things, without destroying free-will. The rewards that God bestows were, according to them, proportioned to the merit of the performer. In short, under the most seducing appearances of sanctity they concealed the most enormous vices.

THE sect of Essenians. This sect departed farther than any of the rest from the Jewish rites. It owed its original to the persecutions of the kings of Syria, or rather to the invasion of Cambyfes. The Essenians lived in the country, and solitary places, without altars, without temples, paying God a spiritual homage alone. Their manner of living resembled some Christian monastic institutions; they had regulated hours in which they performed appointed duties; the seventh day, however, was more solemnly observed than the rest. They taught that souls have an affinity with God; that they are submitted to an absolute destiny; and that the law is to be observed, but with rites purely allegorical. Josephus and Philo speak of them with some prolixity.

LASTLY, we may add to these the Therapeutic sect which flourished in Egypt; and was entirely

monastic. The doctrines its followers professed were a collection of speculations, partly borrowed from Judaism, and partly from the Pythagorean philosophy. This deluded people, abandoning their wives and families, buried themselves in forests and deserts, where they passed the time in singing hymns, in practising allegorical rites, in conversing upon the nature of the Godhead, the original of the world, and subjects of the like nature.

§ 2. *Of the Times which succeeded the destruction of JERUSALEM.*

ALL the pretensions of the Jews to philosophy 'till this unhappy period were very weak, and could scarcely be said to resemble what passed by that name among the Greeks and other nations. The Jews only had collected, during their several captivitys among various gentile nations, the different opinions of each, and these they in some measure suited to their own religion.

AFTER the entire subversion of Jerusalem, the Jewish wisdom was divided into *exoteric* and *esoteric*. The first has nothing in common with what passed by the name of exoteric philosophy among the gentiles. It was entirely founded among the Jews upon the principle of tradition, and was at best a theology, in which things above reason were injudiciously confounded with those which we are taught by the usual methods of attaining truth by reason. The frequent abuse of allegory still led them more

astray from the principles of sound judgment and true argumentation; so that it would be wrong to mention their doctrines in an history of philosophy, if in the middle ages they had not mixed several notions borrowed from the Peripatetics with their philosophy.

MANY schools founded in Palestine, the most flourishing of which were those of Jafna and Tiberias, gave birth to the doctrines of the Talmudists, which had for its principal authors the rabbins Jochanan, Gamaliel, and Jehuda surnamed the Holy, after whom it is customary to divide the Jews into seven classes. Among these doctors there is scarce one who distinguished himself by the study of astronomy or philosophy. About the year of our Lord 170, the compilation which bears the name of the Talmud was begun, which comprehends the Mishna of Jerusalem, and the Gemara of Babylon. It is a collection of laws, customs, constitutions, ecclesiastical traditions, and jurisprudence as well moral as theological. The Gemara was completed about the end of the seventh century.

THE doctrine which is called Cabbalistic is contained in the mysterious books intituled Happeliah, Habbahir, and Sohar. The rabbins Akibha, and Simeon, were the propagators of it; but they taught it as a secret doctrine. It underwent some persecutions in the third century, and it was generally opposed in the east, where, about the eleventh century,



this, together with all Jewish knowlege, was totally obliterated.

THERE was, however, a *mixed* philosophy, composed of the internal and external doctrines of the Jews, which prevailed in the west, where the Jews were permitted greater freedom, and applied themselves more openly to rabbinical and cabbalistic learning. The philosophy of Aristotle was introduced into it, notwithstanding the opposition of many rabbins; and of this mixture we find many instances in the work which is known by the name of *Cori*, and also in the works of that celebrated rabbin Moses Maimonides. This mixed doctrine has a strong resemblance to the positive and moral theology which was then taught by the Jews; and rabbi Saadiah Gaon reduced into a system. Maimonides still gave it a more philosophical air, and drew up thirteen articles of faith, which he called radical articles. With regard to the moral part, it contains a most deplorable mixture of sacred truth and erroneous Peripatetic philosophy. This rabbin taught that God is the supreme being, that he can be distinguished by his attributes, which are quite manifest to those who are gifted with inspiration. He gives the properties of the godhead the name of *lights*, and asserts that God regulates all things by their assistance. The decrees of God, he observes, determine all events, but without prejudicing man's liberty, as there is always a power in him of determining his own choice. All evil proceeds from

a depravity of will, the decrees of God being conditional, and not compulsive. The world has been created; the angels are clothed with bodies; the heavens are animated; life is measured out to man by an immutable destiny; all sublunary things receive their generative powers from the stars, and this he calls the *sidereal destiny*. There are many classes of angels, and each of these has a different employment, and different qualifications; evil intentions never destroy good actions, which always remain good from their own nature; the soul passes after death through several transmigrations, etc.

THE principles of their esoteric doctrines were not derived from an application of the scripture, but founded entirely upon philosophical suppositions. It is no easy task to give an exact history of the Cabbala, and many writers have failed in this respect, from not having attended to the distinction between what is styled the *pure Cabbala*, and that which is called the impure; the one the secret tradition of the orthodox doctrine, the other of the heterodox. There are some also who pretend that the pure Cabbala subsisted under the dispensation of the old Jewish law; and certain it is that the Hebrews had their secret manner of instruction; but they only taught in this manner the true doctrines of antient revelation. But when the gift of prophecy ceased, this method was no longer encouraged, and tradition usurped its place. After this the Jews in Egypt and elsewhere adopted the

the secret philosophy of those countries they resided in, as we have already observed; and this method was followed by Philo and others. The fear which the Jews had of being totally dispersed in the second century induced them to commit these doctrines to writing, and thus the Cabbala from being relatively pure in the beginning, by degrees increased in size and absurdity.

THE Cabbala is usually divided into *theoretical* and *practical*. The latter consists in an artificial arrangement of divine words, which contain magical virtues, and which are capable of producing miraculous effects. The former is a species of sacred metaphysics, drawn from scripture, explained by a secret tradition. The Cabbala is also divided into *literal*, which is but an artificial arrangement of the words of the holy scriptures; and *philosophical*, which is what comes most properly under our consideration at present.

It was supported upon the following principles: nothing is made by nothing, particularly matter could not be made from nothing, and therefore there is no such thing; there exists only in the universe an infinite spirit who is God, and from whom all things proceed; the world is an emanation of his power, and formed with different degrees of excellence; whatever is nearest the source of emanation is most pure: there have been ten emanations proceeding from the invisible source by means of one first principal. From these secondary emanations

the Cabbalistic worlds have been formed, and the soul of man also. All things must in the end return to the primitive source.

THE true principal emanation is called Adam Kadmon; by this, as through a channel, all the divine perfections descend to inferior beings, the powers of the divinity parting through the universe as from a center. These emanations send down to our world what is called by them the *sephirotic lights*.

THESE sephirotic lights are divine emanations which we may represent to the imagination under the figure of a tree, from the root of which, called by them Eusoph, proceed ten branches; namely, the *crown, prudence, wisdom, strength, beauty, grandeur, glory, fortitude, victory, and dominion*.

THERE are four worlds; the Azyluthic world, which is that of emanations; the Briah, or that of creation; the Jezirah, or that of formation; and the Asiah, or that of fabrication. These are so many worlds subordinate to the principal emanations from whence the material world has been formed.

SPIRITS are of different orders in proportion to the worlds in which they reside. In the Azyluth are the spirits called Sepiroth; in the Briah, those termed Thrones; in the Jezirah, Metatron and his angels; and in the Asiah, Samuel and his followers. The Klippoth are evil spirits who disturb the œconomy of all the rest.



THE soul proceeds from the divine understanding, and is endowed with four faculties, or is rather composed of four souls which are like coats one within the other. They are called the Nephesh, or the sensitive soul; the Ruah, or the reasonable soul; the Neschamah, or the intellectual soul; and the Chajah, that is, united with the Divinity. Souls undergo divers transmigrations. What absurdities!

ARTICLE II. *Of the PHILOSOPHY of the SARACENS.*

THE Saracens were originally Arabs who inhabited a part of Asia and Africa; but who, upon the spreading of the Mahometan religion, came westward, and settled themselves upon the maritime coasts of Africa, and throughout Spain. We here intend only to mention their philosophy from the time of their embracing Islamism, or the religion of Mahomet; for before this period the Saracens lived in profound ignorance, if we may believe themselves, although we have some reason to doubt this upon turning our eyes to the beauty of their language, the harmony of their verse, and the copiousness and delicacy of their proverbs.

THE alcoran, or the law of Mahomet, can in no light be considered as a philosophical performance. It is intirely built upon a pretended revelation, and scarce any part of it supported by reasoning. On the contrary, the human sciences are proscribed in

this work of imposture; and the followers of Mahomet still adhere to the principle which induced the barbarous caliph to burn the famous library of Alexandria. If, said he, the books of this library contain any thing against the true religion, they should be burnt on that account: and if they contain any thing in defence of it, they are superfluous; for the alcoran is alone sufficient.

THE caliphs of the Abasside, or Hascchemide families, who reigned in the eighth century, were more favourable to literature. Almangor particularly, in the ninth century, protected philosophy, and had several professors of physic at his court; and he also caused several books to be translated from the Greek into Arabic. To him succeeded Rasud, who gave encouragement to several philosophers even of the christian religion, and rewarded them in a very liberal manner; but Alnamon may be considered as a caliph who chiefly introduced philosophy, who engaged the Arabians to apply to it, and brought mathematics into some repute. He founded a school at Bagdad for these purposes, under the direction of John Mesve of Damascus. He built also several beautiful libraries; and pursuing his plans for the improvement of science to the utmost, he placed, in each of these, learned men who were to improve themselves and others by their study or erudition. It was about this time that the works of Aristotle were translated into Arabic, and that the Peripatetic philosophy began to

gain ground. This age of refinement lasted for three centuries; but the conquests of Tamerlane, and the ferocity of the Turks, again plunged the East in pristine ignorance. The principal philosophical schools were founded at Bassora, Bachara, and Bagdad; and from hence issued a number of philosophers, who disseminated their learning throughout all the East.

THE Saracen philosophy was also embraced at Cairo and Alexandria in Egypt, along the coast of Africa, and in Spain. It soon after was seen to spread itself into Mauritania, Lybia, and the countries of Cyrene and Mannara, under the protection of the princes of the Luntius family. The kingdoms of Fez and Tunis signalized themselves by the splendor of their colleges and their libraries. At the cities of Fez and Larrach large pensions were given to those who taught theology and scholastic philosophy. The mixture of the law of Mahomet with the tenets of the schools produced several sects which went by the name of Alcalam. No part of philosophy was left uncultivated by the scholars of those times and countries. Among the most celebrated names we find those of Alkendi, Alfarah, and Alhahar, Alrafi, Avicenna, Avenzoar, Avenface, Algazel, Mophail, Averroes, and Nasirrodin.

As to the dogmas of the Saracenic philosophy we are to derive none of them from Mahomet, who was a man totally illiterate, and whose book seems to contain not a single trace of philosophy. However,

it must be owned, that the succeeding interpreters of his doctrines took all possible pains to give philosophical and allegorical explanations of what he himself wrote without any, and this produced a mixture of doctrines which in the end led them to atheism. From hence arose the ridiculous sect of the *Parlans*, who were trifling sophists employed only in obscuring truth by all the subtlety of disputation. The philosophy of Aristotle which then took the lead was miserably corrupted by them; they read his works in faulty translations, and mixed their own hypotheses, which still obscured him the more. From thence that species of infidelity arose called Averroism.

#### ARTICLE IV. *Of the PHILOSOPHY of the CHRISTIANS.*

**W**E shall here distinguish, 1. the primitive christians; and 2. those of the middle age.

##### §. I. *Of the PHILOSOPHY of the PRIMITIVE CHRISTIANS.*

OUR Saviour and his apostles had their knowledge from a more pure fountain than that of philosophy. The lights which they introduced into the world were immediately drawn from heaven, and have nothing in common with the frivolous speculations of human wisdom. It is true, we frequently find the name of philosophy ascribed to the pre-



cepts of the christian religion among antient authors, as if such an epithet could enhance its value. However, their mistake arose from another; for they supposed that all improvements in science were immediate inspirations from heaven, and that christianity in particular had a right to be deduced from the same source. There have been many also who have placed our Saviour among the number of philosophers, either because he was the author of all true wisdom, or because he was perfectly skilled in the learning of the Jews, or because he taught publicly in the manner of the philosophers of that time. Yet it need scarce be observed, that thus confounding his august mission with the self-delegated attempts of a mere philosopher is at once an unjust, as well as a criminal, procedure; nor can we say differently with regard to the apostles, who it is well known had not the least tincture of letters, and who consequently were indebted to the holy Spirit for all they knew or wrote. St. Paul seems the only personage among them who was versed in the learning of the times; but he often solemnly disclaims its assistance, and calls it folly in comparison of the more excellent lights of the gospel. It is, therefore, highly injudicious to seek the marks of Peripatetic philosophy in the epistles he has left us.

FROM hence it is clear that the author of christianity and his disciples taught a wisdom far above that of philosophy, and indeed of a very different tendency. With respect to the philosophy of the

fathers, they might be said to possess some human attainments; and yet we must use great circumspection in deciding upon their merits in this particular. We must be upon our guard not to ascribe to these holy men what succeeding impostors would persuade us to believe, who attempted to allegorize the scriptures; and thus gave birth to a variety of sects; of which the Gnostics hold the first rank. The false air of sublimity, which these allegories diffused over the particular doctrines they were brought to illustrate, had nothing either truly philosophical, or even religious in it. This was very different from what the real doctors of the church undertook to teach, as they professed a religion perfectly pure, and exempt from those errors which arise from human frailty. In the course of the second century the Christian religion was embraced by learned men, who were strongly also attached to the Grecian philosophy, particularly to the systems of Pythagoras and Plato. Many of them made good use of these their superior acquirements to confound the impiety of the Gentiles, refuting them by arguments drawn from their own religions and philosophy. They spared no sect, but they particularly exposed that of Plato, which they unjustly considered as the only source of the gnostic heresy, and which however, as we have already observed, was derived rather from the Eastern philosophy. There were also about that time several christian doctors who made attempts to unite all the

philosophy of the pagans into one system, which might serve to confound idolatry entirely; and this was the reigning method of attack during the third and fourth centuries also. It was upon this principle that the fathers of the church seem often to approve the philosophy of the Gentiles, and particularly that of Plato, whom they asserted to have spoken of the divinity in the sublimest manner; but they had by no means the same high opinion of the Peripatetic and Epicurean sects, which they ever loaded with reproach. They did not however entirely adopt the system of Plato; they only adopted some of his opinions, and injudiciously enough attempted to blend them with the doctrines of Christianity. From hence has proceeded the Platonism of the fathers, which has made so much noise. But to deal candidly, we may venture to affirm, that the fathers were very indifferent philosophers; and in particular had scarce any pretensions to logic. A knowledge of nature was equally hidden from them; and even in morality they were in many instances erroneous. But of all opinions none were more fatal to the christian church than those of the Alexandrine and Eclectic sects; from whence the numberless heresies of succeeding ages derived their origin.

AMONG the writers who have acquired most reputation in treating of these subjects, we find Justin Martyr, who, from being a Platonic philosopher, was converted to christianity. He acquitted him-

self with great honour in the several disputes which he maintained against Creseus the Cynic philosopher, and some of the Peripatetics. Tatian, who was a sophist of Syria, became his disciple; and, after the death of his master, was weak enough to incline to the Gnostic heresy, and supported the system of emanations. Theophilus of Antioch and Athenagoras undertook to expose the mythological fables of the Greeks. Clemens and Pantænus, who were masters of the Catechetical school of Alexandria, mixed with their exposition of the doctrines of christianity several opinions borrowed from the Platonists, Stoics, and the philosophy of the East. But of all who were led astray by the Alexandrine philosophy, perhaps none was more remarkable than the famous Origen. Adamantius also, the scholar of Ammonius Saccas, attempted to debase christianity by uniting with it the Eclectic opinions of his master. His whole doctrine may be reduced to this; that God is the source of all beings; that they have flowed from him by *emanation*; and that they will return into him again after passing through a variety of changes here. Anatolius was the only philosopher who attempted to unite the Alexandrine and Peripatetic philosophy into one system. The path which was thus chalked out by the fathers in the third century was followed in the fourth by Lactantius, Arnobius, Eusebius, and other apologists for christianity. Chalcidius wrote a philosophical commentary upon the *Timæus* of



Plato, where there is scarce a thought that points out his being a christian. St. Augustine of the fifth century deserves a place among the greatest philosophers. He was in the beginning of almost every sect; first, a Peripatetic, then a Manichean, next an Academic, afterwards a Platonist, and lastly, leaving the folly of human wisdom, he embraced christianity, and became one of its most illustrious defenders. There are still, however many, vestiges of the Platonic doctrines in his writings. Synesius, who was the friend of Hypasia the female Eclectic philosopher, though a christian bishop, yet mixed many of the Pagan absurdities with the truths of the gospel.

*Of the PHILOSOPHY of the CHRISTIANS of the  
MIDDLE AGE.*

IN the west, the irruptions of the Goths and Vandals, during the fifth and sixth centuries, began to obscure the little knowledge of these unhappy times. There seemed scarce any traces of learning left, and the consul Boethius shone like a star in this night of ignorance. Towards the end of the seventh century, the Alexandrine philosophy, received among the Gentiles, and introduced by Origen into the church, had numbers of followers among the western monks; but out of the cloyster the doctrines of Aristotle began to gain ground, and afterwards grew to that amazing height which continued for several succeeding ages. Philoponus and John of

Damascus were the most celebrated Peripatetics of that age. Soon after, the incursions of the Saracens involved the philosophic world in the most profound darkness. Some gleams of learning appeared in the East in the ninth and tenth centuries; and among others, Photius the patriarch of Constantinople was distinguished for his literary abilities and erudition. The emperor Constantine Porphyrogeneta was also a friend to literature; and his encouragements gave rise to a number of philosophers, the chief of which were Psellus, the two Leos, Nicetas, Michael of Ephesus, Nicephorus Blemmides, Gregoras, Gregorius Laphytus, and Michael Psellus the younger, who was well versed in the Alexandrine philosophy.

It was different, however, in the West: from the 7th century the study of literature seemed wholly unknown. Gregory the Great proscribed the science of mathematics, caused the Palatine library to be burnt, forbid the clergy to meddle with secular studies, and for former literature substituted books of morality, which were but indigested rhapsodies borrowed from different writers. The Greek language was perfectly unknown, and no other book was read but the dialectic of St. Augustine, and even without turning it to practice. There is scarce one philosopher to be found in this age, if we may not make one exception in favour of Hodorus of Seville. In the eighth century, the ritual of the church entirely banished philosophy, and it fled to

take refuge in the monasteries of Great Britain. Charlemagne truly merited the surname of Great, since he laboured as much for the restoration of philosophy as he did for the extending of his empire. Assisted by the counsels of Alminus, he erected public schools, which gave birth to many learned men; but in the age succeeding, their absurd methods of instruction obliterated all philosophy once more, notwithstanding the efforts of some emperors to support it in Germany, and those of Alfred in England. There were indeed some great men, who, guided solely by the force of their genius, raised themselves above their age, and claim the veneration of posterity. Scotus, surnamed Erigenes, was one of the most renowned of this number, and he is considered as the father of the Mystic philosophy. In the tenth century, ignorance was at its height, and yet it produced the famous Gerbert. The eleventh century gave birth to the pontifical law; and it was then also that Julbert opposed the progress of ignorance. In this age also the dialectic of the schools began to gain ground; by which Lanfranc and Roscelin acquired reputation. The philosophy of Aristotle was also followed, but with very little advantage. At length, the school philosophy, properly so called, was introduced, which continued to tyrannize over the human mind for several centuries.

THE origin of this is uncertain: it is most likely, however, that it derives its source from the dialectic works of Victorinus and Boethius which were

published about the times of St. Augustine. If we should distinguish the different stages of this philosophy, as we do in the growth of the human body, the time of its conception seems to be about the tenth century; that of its encrease about the eleventh; its birth about the twelfth; and its vigour in the thirteenth. Its first period, therefore, extends from the middle of the eleventh to the middle of the twelfth century; in this period we find the famous Abelard, Lombard, Pulleynus, Gilbertus Poreus, Petrus Comestor, Johannes Sarisburiensis, Alanus, Alexander Wellams, and Robertus Capito. The second age extends from the middle of the twelfth century to the year 1330. In this interval flourished Albertus Magnus, Thomas Aquinas, Bonaventure, Petrus Hispanicus, Roger Bacon, Ægidius de Columna, Scotus, Petrus Apponus, Anoldus Villa Nova, etc. Lastly, the third age conducts to the times of the revival of literature, and furnishes Durand, Occam, Richard Suiffat, Buridan, Marsilius, Gualtherus, Burleus, Petrus ab Alliaco, Herman Wessellus, and Petrus Aureolus.

THE sects of *Nominals* and *Reals* caused great troubles. They owe their origin to a dispute concerning logical universals, which was begun in the eleventh age by John the sophist and Roscelin. We comprehend, under the name of School philosophers, all those who lived in Europe from the eleventh to the sixteenth century, and by this name are distinguished all those who were appointed by Charlemagne to teach in public schools, and who



afterwards had monasteries built upon the same foundation. These doctors employed the subtleties of dialectic in teaching the truths of philosophy and theology. As their dialectic was borrowed from Aristotle, they came to regard this philosopher as the only guide to be followed, and even an infallible director. His metaphysics were regarded as an incontestible system, and upon this they built their theology and all their ecclesiastical doctrines. The two sects above named were for a long time at variance, with great violence and various success. About the times of Abelard and Rosceline the Nominals had the upper hand; but they did not long preserve their advantage, and they were at length overcome. However the Realists in their turn divided among themselves, and this would again have subjected them to their adversaries, had they not been supported by men of great abilities; such as Albertus Magnus, Thomas Aquinas, and Duns Scotus. After this a long time elapsed, during which the Nominal sect was scarcely mentioned, until William Occam, one of the most subtle spirits of his age, revived it, and filled all France and Germany with the flame of disputation; and it was from the bosom of these contentions that the academy of Leipsic arose. The disputants often were not content with barely using the force of eloquence in the controversy, but frequently of much more dangerous weapons, and battles were the consequence of a philosophical question which neither side understood.

B O O K III.

*Containing the HISTORY of PHILOSOPHY from  
the Revival of Letters to the present Times.*

MODERN philosophy, which we date from  
the downfal of the schools, may be divided  
into *Sectaric* and *Eclectic*.

C H A P. I.

*Of the SECTARIC PHILOSOPHY.*

WE date the revival of letters from that happy  
period which began to open at the thirteenth  
and fourteenth centuries. Both Greek and Latin  
literature was then cultivated by men whose abili-  
ties contributed to bring them again into esteem.  
Of this number were Dante, and Petrarch, who had  
many disciples, and who introduced into Italy a  
taste for true erudition and solid eloquence, which  
afterwards diffused itself into other countries. Phi-  
lology served as a key to unlock the treasures of an-  
tiquity; and Manuel Chrysolorus, who took re-  
fuge in Italy in the year 1337, introduced such a  
passion for Greek literature, as to have an incredi-  
ble number of auditors. These were afterwards

disperſed into ſeveral parts of Italy, and ſtill farther contributed to propagate the riſing paſſion for Greek, and made many verſions of the writings of the philoſophers who had written in this language. Theſe beginnings received a conſiderable encrease by the city of Conſtantinople's being taken by the Turks in 1453, when its learned men came to take refuge in Italy, and found a favourable reception at the courts of different princes, who were ambitious of promoting the arts of peace among their ſubjects. Of theſe the princes of the houſe of Medicis chiefly diſtinguiſhed themſelves. Florence became a ſecond Athens, and Coſmo, juſtly intitled the Great, ſpared no expence for the improvement of learning, ſending Johannes Laſcaris into the Eaſt, in order to buy up all the Greek manuſcripts he could find; but particularly their philoſophical works. Theſe acquiſitions contributed to throw new lights upon philoſophy, and, in ſome meaſure, to introduce a reformation. Pope Nicholas V. greatly aſſiſted in a ſimilar undertaking, and particularly cauſed a new and better verſion of the works of Ariſtotle to be ſet forward. Nor was the Platonic or Alexandrine philoſophy without its admirers and reſtorers.

AT the head of thoſe who contributed to reform philoſophy, we may place Raymond Lully, who, in the 13th century, undertook this work, and pretended to new lights in promoting the ſciences. He may juſtly be reckoned the greateſt of all viſionaries. After having concealed himſelf for ſeven

months in solitude, he undertook several voyages with the fruitless expectation of converting infidels to the christian religion. So absurd a scheme was attended with the expected consequences. The Saracens of Africa made him undergo the most dreadful tortures, which he survived but a short time, dying in his passage back to Europe in the year 1317. With a head almost half crazed with enthusiasm, he yet possessed immense erudition and great talents. He is celebrated for his profound skill in the theory and practice of chemistry; and his works upon that subject make a part of the modern chemical library. He was called the illuminated doctor. His logic, or *ars lulistica*, is a method of finding out truth without employing reason in the disquisition; and this in any subject of what nature soever it might be; and he has not been without many followers in so absurd a pursuit. Several men of celebrated abilities have taken pains in bringing this art to greater perfection: of which number we find Agrippa, Jordanus Brunus, and Alstedius. Others, however, with more judgment, have perceived that it was an art that rather taught words than things: that substituted allegory for truth; and made rather quacks than scholars; and thus, at length, they brought it into contempt and oblivion. In fact, it was only a combination of circles where things were disposed according to fancy, and not to nature, fitted rather to retard



than to advance mankind in their pursuits of science.

DANTE was a person to whom the republic of letters owed more real obligations, and he may justly be regarded as one of those lights which first contributed to dispel the darkness of the times. He resided chiefly in Florence, was an excellent poet, and wrote equally well in Italian and French. Perfectly convinced of the futility of scholastic philosophy, he addicted himself entirely to the doctrine of Plato, many of whose precepts and principles are found scattered through his poems. He treated also upon some subjects in natural philosophy.

FRANCIS Petrarch, the disciple of Dante, first applied himself to the study of polite learning, and then made a considerable proficiency in morality. He excelled in both, and contributed not a little to rescue, as well the Attic as the Roman muses, from barbarity. He had several scholars, who were afterwards his imitators, and who, in some measure, shared his reputation. Among them, we find the names of Leonardus Brunus, Aretin, Angelus Politianus, Hermolaus Barbarus, Poggi, Bracciolin, Francis Philephus, Janutius Manettus, Nicolas de Cusa, and others in great numbers, who were the ornaments of the fourteenth century, and contributed to spread the taste for Greek literature by their translations.

LAURENTIUS Valla, a man of an intrepid and daring disposition, warmly opposed the barbarity

of style, and the vain subtleties of the philosophy then cultivated. He introduced considerable changes in the dialectic of Aristotle, having declared himself in favour of the morality of Epictetus. This drew upon him many persecutions, particularly from the clergy.

RODOLPHUS Agricola studied school philosophy at Louvain; but being quickly disgusted with its absurdities, he went to study the belles lettres in Italy, and also improved himself in more sound philosophy under Theodore Gaza. Being invited to Heidleberg to teach the languages, he there undertook to reform the systems of Aristotle, and published a treatise upon dialectic.

UPON entering into a detail of those facts, which concern the sectarist philosophers, we shall first mention the attempts which were made to re-establish the antient philosophy in general, and afterwards of the efforts made either to revive antient sects; or to introduce new ones.

ARTICLE I. *Of the first Attempts made towards the Re-establishment of antient PHILOSOPHY.*

THESE attempts were first made by the fugitive Greeks, who were driven from Constantinople, upon the conquest of that city by the Turks. At the head of these we find the name of Johannes Argyropule, whom the liberality of Cosmo de Medicis supported, and enabled to teach the Greek philosophy in Italy. Many other Greeks were en-

couraged by this example, and in a short time Italy was amply furnished with Grecian philosophers.

GEMISTUS Pletho was the first who laid the foundation of the Alexandrine or Platonic philosophy in Italy. He left the Greek communion to conform to that of the Latin, and afterwards returned to Peloponnesus. He wrote a treatise upon laws, in which he followed the doctrines of Plato; but though it was a work of great erudition, yet it incurred the censures of the church, and was publicly burnt.

BESSARION was a native of Trebizond. He entered into the order of St. Basil, and was one of those who laboured at the re-union of the Greek and Latin church at the council of Florence. Having been elected to the patriarchate of Constantinople, he was prevented from filling the duties of this station by a faction against him. He, therefore, conformed to the Latin church, and was rewarded with the dignity of a cardinal, together with the bishoprick of Tusculum. He maintained all his preferments with honour and applause, and died in an embassy with which he was charged to the court of France. Of all the exiled Greeks, he is incontestably allowed to have possessed the most erudition. He was attached to the Alexandrine philosophy, but without despising that of Aristotle, and he even projected an union between the two sects. His most remarkable work is his refutation of the calumniator of Plato.

MARSILIUS Ficinus, who enjoyed the favour and the bounties of Cosmo de Medicis was chiefly indebted for this protection to his acquaintance with Plato, whom that prince had been taught to admire. Ficinus, therefor, spent his whole life in examining, correcting and translating Greek manuscripts into Latin. He united, however, to his philosophical studies the practice of physic. He also taught the Alexandrine philosophy, and its pretended mysteries, to the youth not only of Florence, but of several other countries, who came to hear him. Becoming daily more famous, he was protected by persons of the highest rank, and was essentially serviceable to the world by giving the best translation that has been made of the works of Plato and Plotinus. His extreme attachment to Plato, however, has, in some measure, rendered him a visionary, as was the case with all who attached themselves wholly to a single sect.

JOHANNES Picus, prince of Mirandola, rendered himself famous for his erudition, in which he was considered in that age as without a rival. He was in fact a man of extraordinary talents, and his travels through France and Italy, together with his incredible application, so far improved his knowledge, that, while very young, he went to Rome, in order to challenge the philosophers of all the world to a public dispute. When he attained the age of manhood he quitted his studies for the austerities of a monastic life; and he afterwards



formed a design of preaching the gospel in barbarous countries. This argued a degree of phrenzy, which indeed soon followed, and put an end to his life. He died at the age of thirty-two, after having been the dupe of many impostures, who sold him Cabbalistic, Hermetic, and other books, as genuine original productions; but which were in fact only gross impositions. From these infected sources he derived many opinions which he united with the doctrines of Plato, and thus made a composition of barbarism and absurdity. John Francis Mirandola, the nephew of the former, distinguished himself also by his attachment to the same philosophy.

THE followers of Aristotle shewed themselves not less earnest than those of Plato in defending the opinions of their master. As there was at that time no other translation of Aristotle but one made from the Arabic, by order of Frederic II. they laboured with all assiduity to form a better; and in this they were principally protected by pope Nicolas V. Before this time the disciples of Alexander Aphrodisæus, and of Averroes, began to multiply in Italy, and had the effrontery to publish their opinions, which justly merited the ecclesiastical censures. This it was which engaged several Greeks to undertake the defence of Aristotle. They, therefor, attempted to shew that he was more free from heretical error than was 'till then supposed; and that, in this respect, he had even the advantage of Plato. From hence arose a long and cruel contention between

the Peripatetics and Platonists, which kindled a war that was not appeased without great difficulty.

It is amazing to consider the animosity and virulence which these opposite sects conceived for each other during the fifteenth century. At the head of the Platonists was Pletho, who wrote a book to prove that Plato, with regard to matters of faith, had an incontestible superiority over Aristotle, whom he represented in the most unfavourable light. Georgius Scholaris undertook to refute this performance, and published a work, where he pretended to shew, that the principles of Aristotle were not remote from those of christianity. To this Pletho rejoined, and treated his adversary with virulence, which once more brought on a still more virulent reply. Gaza and George of Trebizond had also a sharp dispute concerning the sense of some passages in Aristotle, which Bessarion undertook to compromise. Michael Apostolius pleaded the cause of the Platonists, and Andronicus Callistus supported the contrary party. After the death of Pletho, George of Trebizond renewed his attacks against the Platonic philosophy, and continued to publish works, in which he made a partial comparison between Plato and Aristotle, which united all the Platonists against him; and this gave rise to that admirable work of Bessarion, already mentioned, against the calumniator of Plato.

THEODORE Gaza, the most distinguished of those

who undertook the defence of Aristotle, was a man very well versed in all kinds of literature. He quitted Greece, in order to take refuge in Italy, where he chiefly employed himself in making excellent translations of Aristotle and Theophrastus. He also added to his erudition no inconsiderable share of eloquence,

GEORGE of Trebizond, originally of Crete, and of the number of the fugitive Greeks, taught philosophy at Venice and Rome, and was made secretary to Pope Nicolas V. The acrimony with which he defended Aristotle lost him the favour of his protectors; and towards the latter end of his life, he entirely subsisted by the bounties of Alphonfus king of Naples. He was a man of real learning, but of too warm a disposition, which, added to his imprudence, contributed to render his life miserable.

GEORGIUS Scholaris, known also by the name of Gennadius, was completely versed in Greek literature. He made a considerable figure at the council of Florence. Having been elected patriarch of Constantinople after the taking of that city, he ended his days in a monastery. He was a confirmed Peripatetic, and consequently a professed enemy to the Platonists.

ARTICLE II. *Of the Labours of those who singly attempted to revive antient Sects, or to introduce new ones.*

§ 1. *Of the ANCIENT SECTS which were revived.*

BARBARISM having by degrees yielded to the efforts of awakened genius, the rust of ignorance began to wear away, and truth to charm with her native lustre. The absurdities of former ages began to lose ground, and every attempt was made to raise the edifice of science to its pristine splendor. About the end of the fifth century, this great work was far advanced in Italy; but the same progress was not made either in France, Spain, England, or other parts of Europe. The bonds of slavery were so closely rivetted, that, in spite of all the labours of superior wisdom or virtue, the people remained in native barbarity. It was not, therefor, 'till after reiterated attempts that freedom and science made their entery together, and gave birth to many men of literature and reason, who undertook to make the world wiser and better than they found it. Of this number were Reuchin, Cuspinian, Dalburgh, Vadian Lazius, Peutinger, etc. At length, the liberty of thinking prevailed; the yoke under which the mind groaned for so many ages was at length shaken off; the absurdities of philosophy, as well as of religion, were no longer blindly revered,



and men set themselves earnestly down to reform the errors of both. Some men of superior understanding were of opinion however that the reformation should be slow; and that a remedy, whose effects itself might be more dangerous than the disorder, should be administered with great precaution. Such was the sentiment of Erasmus, Le Fevre, Vivez, and Nizolius, who attacked the school philosophers with arms borrowed from their own opinions; the first in his incomparable panegyric on folly; the second, in separating the real philosophy of Aristotle from the absurdities of his commentators; the third and fourth, in uniting in their own works all the truths of modern philosophy with all the elegance of the finest writers of celebrated antiquity. Such was the nature of their attempts; but those, who were for making a thorough reformation, undertook the task with more vigour. They boldly lopped away the excrescencies of false reasoning; and numbers of them, though divines by profession, yet improved the philosophy of the times, by making it subservient to the theological opinions which they undertook to inculcate. Of this kind we may reckon Sadolet, Fracastorius, Camerarius, and others.

SOME of the religious orders of monks were now the only set of men who still adhered to the Peripatetic philosophy. Those men who thought the principles of religion in danger, when the opinions of Aristotle were controverted, still adhered to their

antient master, and were resolved to continue, as they do to this day, rather behind the rest of mankind in literature, than in philosophical zeal and attachment; but notwithstanding their attachment to school logic, yet, in conformity to the age, they in some measure laid aside that barbarity of stile and manner which 'till then prevailed among them. Some of them even adopted the newly introduced opinions, which they united with their own with some art and much precaution. Thus school philosophy daily declined, while the Eclectic mode of philosophizing every hour gained ground; particularly in those countries where men were allowed the freedom of opinion; so that barbarism and the tyranny of sects were irretrievably abolished.

THE dominican friars, who were the followers of Thomas Aquinas, were regarded with a high degree of estimation. Dominicus Soto, who made a considerable figure among them, was the first man who treated of natural law. Francis of St. Victoria carried on the same researches to a greater extent. Chrysoftome Juvellus united the Aristotelian and the Platonic philosophy; nor were Banner, Zanard, and others, without reputation.

THE franciscans, who were attached to Scotus, formed a distinct sect from that of the Thomists. Among them we find Johannes Ponzius, Mastrius, Delemandes, Meursius, Frassenius, etc.

THE Cistercian monks chiefly regarded the ascetic or practical parts of philosophy, and consequently

gave but little attention to the speculative opinions of the schools. However, there were some of particular note among them; such as, Maurigues, Gomez, Marfilius, Vasquez, Peter of Oviedo, and particularly Caramuel, who broached many opinions, many of them apparent paradoxes, but none of which he was able sufficiently to prove.

BUT of all the religious orders, the Jesuits seem to have held the foremost rank for their philosophical acquisitions, and they have produced men of the greatest abilities; such as Hurtado de Mendoza, Georgius Vasquez, Paul Vallius, Bartholomius Telus, Francis Suarez, Antonius Rubius, who went to instruct the American Indians, Rodolphus of Arriaga, who enriched the school philosophy with some of the modern discoveries, Francis Alphonsus, Francis Gonfalez, Emanuel Goez, author of a work entitled, the philosophy of Conimbro, Thomas Compton, John Riccioli, the mathematician, and others.

*Of the SECT of pure PERIPATETICS.*

THE works of Aristotle were the first of the philosophic kind, which at the revival of letters the learned undertook to refine. The great authority of this philosopher, as he was chiefly studied by all ranks, invited the attempts of numbers, who took his text for their guide; upon which they grounded their systems, rejecting all the errors of his former commentators, not only those of the Roman catho-

lic church, but of the protestant also, who had recourse to Aristotle in defending of their peculiar doctrines, and looked upon his works, when divested of the errors with which they had been united, as the best magazine of knowledge, and the best assistant in defence of the religion they professed to admire. Of this number was Melancthon, who regarded the Peripatetic philosophy with the highest veneration, and drew up an excellent method of study compiled from principles laid down by Aristotle. Thus by degrees the dialectic of Ramus fell into disrepute, and a new kind of Peripatetism was substituted in its room, 'till finally, even this gave way to the modern method of philosophizing.

THE partizans of the pure Peripatetic philosophy may be distinguished into two classes; that of the Roman catholics, and that of the Protestants.

#### *The ROMAN CATHOLICS.*

IN the beginning the refiners of the Peripatetic philosophy found themselves at a loss what part to reject; for such was then the disposition of the times that the smallest deviation from established errors was sure to incur opposition and beget persecution. There were, however, some who had skill enough to attain the improvement without incurring the reproach. Of this number were Antonius Polus, Honorius Fabri, Franciscus Rassler, and others, who proposed their improvements rather as conjecture than assertion.



LEON Thomæus, who first openly vindicated the true doctrines of Aristotle, was a disciple of the banished Greeks, from whom he first learnt an attachment to Plato; but afterwards declaring himself for Aristotle, he taught his doctrines at Padua in the year 1521. He was perfectly versed in the Greek language.

PETARUS Pompanatius, a native of Mantua, and a disciple of Trapolin, was professor of Bologna, and died in 1517. He was a man of great wit and most penetrating genius, but very unsettled in his principles, and even sometimes inclining to downright atheism. Pretending to controvert the impiety of the Averroistes, he fell into the absurdities of the Alexandrine school, denied the immortality of the soul, and filled that part of his works, which treated of enchantments and destiny, with the most exceptionable errors of Aristotle. For this reason his books were publicly burnt. He published an apology for them, and submitted himself to the judgment of the church. He had many very celebrated disciples; among others, Hercules of Gonzaga, Theophilus of Folengo, Paulus Jovius, and Gaspard Contareni, who adopted his excellencies without being seduced by his errors. Simon Portius alone followed his master in all his delusions.

AUGUSTINUS Niphus was the adversary of Pompanatius, and refuted his errors by order of pope Leo X. Nor was he less a favourite of Charles V. who had the justest opinion of his merit and abi-

lities. He was, in fact, a man perfectly formed for the world, but rather too liberal in his reproaches. He taught eloquence, philosophy, and medicine, at Naples and Padua.

MAJORAGIUS employed his eloquence in explaining the principles of the Peripatetic philosophy. He was professor of eloquence at the college of Milan; and he afterwards taught jurisprudence at Ferrara, and died in 1551. He is reckoned one of the best interpreters of Aristotle: the perspicuity of his ideas, and the beauty of his style, contribute to make him equally profitable and pleasing.

BARBARUS was of a Venetian family, not less remarkable in that republic than in the commonwealth of letters. He united a skill in mathematics with a profound knowledge of Peripatetic philosophy; of which he was a zealous admirer. He assisted in the council of Trent, and died in 1569.

SEPULVEDA, a Spaniard, taught philosophy at Bologna, and was a great favourite of Albertus Pius, prince of Carpi, in whose house he lived, until his return into his native country, where he had a place at Salamanca, and was honoured by Charles V. with the place of his historiographer.

PETRUS Victorius greatly distinguished himself among the critics and philosophers of the sixteenth century. He was born at Florence, where he continued to reside, and receive the favours of Cosmo de Medicis. He taught both the Greek and Latin languages, together with moral philosophy upon

the principles of Aristotle. He is looked upon as one of the best commentators of that philosopher.

ZABARELLA was unrivalled in his explication of the Aristotelian logic, as it was really laid down in the writings of the great Greek philosopher. He was not reckoned eloquent, but he had great depth and penetration. He threw also many lights upon natural philosophy, and foretold his own death which happened in the year 1559.

ALEXANDER and Francis Picolomini were two brothers who acquired great reputation. The elder taught eloquence and logic for many years, and was afterwards made bishop of Patras. However, his promotion did not in the least relax his assiduity. The other, who had been the disciple of Zimara, taught philosophy at Perusium and Padua with large appointments. He died in the year 1604, aged eighty-four.

THERE were three Florentines of the name of Strozzi, Cyriac, Peter, and John Baptist. The first was justly admired for his skill in philosophy and architecture; and no less respected for the integrity of his life. The second was distinguished among the celebrated painters of the age of Leo X.; and the third was an excellent poet.

JAMES Mazorius early conceived a design of reconciling the contrarieties of different systems, and afterwards gave up all his time to the execution of his plan. He composed a book which he entitled, *Of the triple life of man*. He was remarka-

ble for a surprising memory. He was rewarded with very large pensions at Rome and Ferrara for his philosophical lectures, and died in 1603.

HUBERT Gifanus, an expert lawyer, a great critic, and a philosopher the most celebrated of his age, taught ethics and jurisprudence, first in Holland, and afterwards at Strasbourg, Altdorff, and Ingolstadt. His moral and political commentaries upon Aristotle were in high esteem. He died in 1604.

JULIO Paccio de Beriga, originally of Vincenza, was an early genius; and while very young gave lessons of philosophy and jurisprudence. His restless disposition hurried him into many countries and cities; to Swisserland and Hungary, to Heidleberg, Sedan, Nismes, Valencia, Padua, etc. He terminated his wandering and his life in the year 1635.

ANDREW Cesalpin ed' Arezza, after having travelled into Germany, became a professor at Pisa, and afterwards first physician to pope Clement V. He practised physic with very great reputation, and was reckoned the most expert Peripatetic of his times; but it is said that his philosophy is fraught with concealed atheism and impiety.

CÆSAR of Cremona, originally of Ceuti, gave public lectures on Peripatetic philosophy at Ferrara and Padua. He was of quick, ready, and complying parts, and knew how to accommodate his religious opinions to the country in which he taught.

THERE still remain several others; of whom we



shall mention only the names. Such as Franciscus Vicomercatus, Ludovicus Septalius, Antonius Montecalinus, Burana, Pernumia, Cottunius, Jason Noricus, Licetus, Rocca, Accorombonus, Vallefius, Nunnesius, etc.

#### PROTESTANTS.

PHILIP Melancthon, a native of the Palatinate, first studied at Heidleberg, and afterwards at Tübingen. He early learnt to despise the scholastic philosophy, and the manner in which it was taught. He, therefor, undertook to examine more closely the dialectic of Aristotle; and being called to the professor's chair at Wittemberg, at the same time that he, in a great measure, supported the protestant cause, he employed his leisure time in the improvement of the Peripatetic philosophy, and the promotion of the true eloquence of the antients. He wrote divers philosophical abrigements; in which he explained many of the obscurities in Aristotle, and rendered his dialectic much more useful. He also strictly enquired into the opinions of other Greek philosophers, and collecting what he thought best from each, formed them into his favourite system.

SIMON Simonis of Lucca taught philosophy and medicine at Geneva, Heidleberg, and Leipzig. From thence he went to Prague, and thence to Poland, where he was kindly received by Sigismund, king of that country. He was perfectly unsettled

in his religious opinions, and this procured him many adversaries, and some persecutions.

JACOBUS Schenckius of Suabia was one of the ornaments of the university of Tubingen. He was the scholar of William Bigot, and was a very skilful physician. He united the doctrines of Galen with those of Aristotle, in whose opinions he was perfectly versed. He was in fact one of the principal ornaments of his age, and may be considered as the first of the German Peripatetic philosophers. He became blind towards the latter end of his life, and died in the year 1587.

PAULUS Scherbius, was a Swiss, and no small ornament of the university of Altdorff, where he long taught with the reputation of being one of the first scholars of his age. He was instructed in the Peripatetic philosophy in Italy, and his first establishment was at Basil. He was also a doctor of physic, and one of the best interpreters of Aristotle.

NICOLAS Taureill of Monthelliard deserves perhaps the foremost rank of all the philosophers of this age, and was equally remarkable as a physician. In his first capacity, he rejected the absurdities of Aristotle; and in his last, he boldly ventured to dissent from him. He died of the plague in 1606.

ERNESTUS Sonner of Nurenberg travelled for some time as a philosopher; but in the course of his journeys he became acquainted with several Socinians, who persuaded him over into their religious sect. He taught natural philosophy and physic at

Altdorff with great applause, and has left some very erudite commentaries upon Aristotle.

CORNELIUS Martini, of Antwerp, figured in the beginning of the seventeenth century, in the university of Helmstadt, and was one of the most zealous defenders of the Aristotelian philosophy; in favour of which he wrote several different tracts against Hoffman and the Ramists. He died in 1621.

CORNELIUS Hornius of Brunswick was the disciple of John Coselius, a man of extensive literature. He was also indebted to Martini for several instructions, and united the graces of the belles lettres with the severity of the Peripatetic system. He first taught philosophy, and afterwards divinity; and was almost in himself a library of antient literature. He died in the year 1649.

HERMAN Conringius, native of Friezeland, is regarded as the most erudite philosopher of the seventeenth century. He was an early genius; studied physic at Leyden; and afterwards became a professor of it at Helmstadt, where he taught also political and natural philosophy. He may be looked on as the founder of the common law in Germany, and was in high favour with many kings and princes, and even emperors themselves. He followed the system of Aristotle, but with moderation, and as a true scholar. Having studied history with great assiduity, he applied his knowledge that way with great success to the illustration of natural law. As he was possessed of an excellent

judgment and uncommon discernment, he abolished many erroneous opinions; and the number of his works only contributed to increase his reputation and his success. He died in 1682.

CHRISTIAN Dreier and Zeidler may be mentioned together, as jointly contributing to render the academy of Königsberg famous. The latter was the disciple of the former. They were both deeply versed in the philosophy of Aristotle; to which they added the most useful erudition, and a profound skill in ecclesiastical antiquities.

JACOBUS Thomafius was very celebrated among the refined Peripatetics. Being born at Leipzig, he pursued his studies in that city, and made a surprising progress in philosophy and eloquence. His knowledge was almost universal; and he particularly threw great lights on the history of philosophy. He had the good fortune to have his sons pursue so worthy an example; and had the honour of being the master of Leibnitz.

GERMANY, Switzerland, and the united Provinces, produced several other men of extensive erudition, who defended the doctrines of Aristotle with great earnestness, and propagated his opinions in the universities of Geneva, Leyden, and other academies.

*Of the* PYTHAGOREO-PLATONICO-CABBALISTIC  
SECT.

THERE were many men of great erudition and



excellent talents who professed this philosophy; but it only served to lead them into error and perplexity. The cause of their deception lay in imagining that an admirable analogy subsisted between the Hebrew doctrines and those of Pythagoras, probably arising from their unskilfulness in the Greek and Hebrew. Thus, although, they delivered their doctrine with great boldness, it was not for that reason better founded; for it scarcely differed from the Alexandrine philosophy, except in being rather more absurd. What contributed to confirm them in their errors was the desire of unfolding the pretended mysteries of the cabbala, in which they were most miserably deceived by impostors, to whom, for this purpose, they had recourse. This threw them into an inconsistency of thinking, from which they could never get free, and which prevented their sect from making an extensive spread among the followers of philosophic novelties.

WE may derive the origin of this sect from the hatred which many learned men had conceived for the Peripatetic philosophy, which they saw conducted only to impiety and atheism. They, therefore, threw themselves into the arms of an opposite Platonic sect, which the fugitive Greeks endeavoured to place in the most favourable point of view. Unfortunately however, they not only embraced the opinions of Plato, but endeavoured to graft upon them several false and absurd traditions, invented by the Jews, and dignified with the appellation of

the cabbala. As this philosophy seemed well accommodated to encrease a respect for religion, the princes of the house of Medicis granted it their protection; and there was an academy opened at Florence for teaching it. The professor's chair was chiefly filled by the disciples of Ficinus: among whom Franciscus Cataneus holds the principal rank. Some of these professors did not depart much from the purity of the real Platonic doctrine; others adulterated it with a mixture of absurdities from the cabbala. During the course of the seventeenth century Platonism was in vogue in England, and answered very good purposes by refuting the doctrines of Hobbes and other materialists, who were the partizans of atheism.

THE patriarch of this celebrated sect was the famous Keuchlin, who, in some measure, became the restorer of literature in Germany. He was a native of Suabia and studied at Paris. The fugitive Greeks first pointed out this method of study; and instructed by them in the erudition of the times, he went to complete himself in jurisprudence at the universities of Basil, Orleans, Poitiers, and Tubingen. Being at this last introduced to the prince of that district, he accompanied him in a journey to Rome. Here he learnt Hebrew, and having contracted an intimacy with Ficinus and the prince of Mirandula, he embraced the same philosophy with them. Upon his return to the Palatinate many persons of distinction declared themselves his disci-

ples. Being sent a second time to Rome upon an embassy, he employed a part of his time in perfecting himself in Greek under Argyropule, and at the same time learning Hebrew from a Jew who was master of that language. Upon his return again to Germany, he gave himself up entirely to the study of the Pythagoreo Platonico-Cabbalistic philosophy, and composed some obscure treatises on what was called in their dialect the *wonderful name*. His warm attachment to Hebrew exposed him to very severe persecutions from the professors of Cologne. He held a considerable employment in Suabia; and while this country was ravaged by war, he resided at Ingoldstadt; but the plague beginning to rage at that city, he was again driven back to Tubingen; where he died in the year 1512, aged 67. He was a man of great talents, and possessed all the erudition that was possible to be acquired in those times; but he particularly excelled in a knowledge of the Greek and Hebrew languages: this, notwithstanding all his errors, rendered him not a little famous, and contributed to give him weight in promoting the reformation of religion which was then begun in Germany.

VENETUS, a Franciscan, was in his time considered as a prodigy of parts; but his desire of uniting the cabbalistic philosophy with the doctrines of holy writ; and thus forming of both a single system, plunged him in the most absurd extravagance. He was severely reprimanded for it by Merfennus.

CORNELIUS Agrippa, a native of Cologne, was a man whose errors were great, and his misfortunes not inferior. After having travelled into various countries, and exercised various professions; after having filled several employments, in which he often gave proofs of his wisdom and his integrity; after having fought battles, negotiated in a public character, and filled the professor's chair; he at last attached himself to the sect of cabbalistic philosophy. He readily became versed in the most mysterious part of the Alexandrine doctrines, and would have acquired unrivalled reputation, had he not excited the indignation of the monks by the satires and invectives he was daily publishing against them. He was by this imprudence reduced to poverty, and sustained incredible hardships. His adversaries had even credit enough with the princes and rulers of the age to get him arrested and thrown into prison; in which he died, at Grenoble, in the year 1535. Agrippa was one of those early geniuses, which was afterwards improved by the most extensive erudition. He was courageous, patient, and an enemy to hypocrisy; but these great qualities were tinctured with still greater faults. He was of an ill-natured disposition, puffed up with vanity, and a desire of vengeance. He loved to impose upon ignorance; and such was the inconsistency of his temper, that it was ever bandied between doubts and enthusiasm, so that instead of acquiring fortune or friends, he only hastened on a miserable death



by a life as miserable. He is, however, wrongfully accused of magic. He pretended indeed to explain this art in his occult philosophy; but it is plain that he only intended to ridicule such an undertaking, as we may see by his treatise which is most read at present, namely, *The vanity of human sciences*.

PATRICIUS rejected the reveries of the Jews, and held only to the Alexandrine philosophy of the Greeks. He was born at Clyssa in Illyria, and for a long time led a wandering and unsettled life, 'till granted the professor's chair at the college of Ferrara; where he taught the Platonic and Alexandrine systems, both by his lectures and writings. He had intentions of forming a system of his own, but was interrupted by death, which happened in the year 1598.

THOMAS Gale became a Platonist from his dislike to the philosophy of Descartes. He published a general body of philosophy, in which he added ingeniously to the opinions of Plato what he supposed wanting to make a complete system. He was a man of great reading; but his judgment was not equal to his erudition.

CUDWORTH, professor at Cambridge, chiefly set himself to oppose the atheists and infidels of his age. For this purpose, he principally drew his arguments from Plato, and studied his philosophy thoroughly, as we may see by that important work which he has left us, intitled, *The intellectual system*.

HENRY More, a doctor of divinity at Cambridge, after having examined several sects, at last became particularly attached to Plato; to which he added also some of the Pythagorico-Cabbalistic doctrines, being fully persuaded that they contained the true wisdom of the antient Hebrews. Upon these principles he drew up a new body of metaphysics.

We shall now speak of some attempts made to revive sects less considerable.

*Of the SECT of PARMENIDES.*

OF this sect Telesio of Cosenza was the restorer. After having laid a foundation of Greek and Latin, he went to study philosophy at Padua, and applied himself at the same time to mathematics; by the assistance of which he threw some lights upon natural knowlege. Disgusted at the unmeaning terms with which the peripatetic philosophy is replete, he was willing to strike out into a new path, and submitted several of his opinions to the learned at Rome. He refused the episcopal see of Cosenza which was offered him, chusing rather to marry; and dedicated his time to the culture of philosophy. Upon becoming a widower, he redoubled his application to study; and examining the works of Aristotle thoroughly, he composed a work in which he proposed overturning them entirely. Having been called to Naples to the professor's chair, he there founded an academy, which was called the Telesian, or Cosentian school. He died in 1598.

His philosophy was partly Eclectic and partly Didactic; that is to say, he was employed in building up and pulling down. With Parmenides he made heat and cold the principles of all things: to which he added matter, but merely passive, and subject entirely to the influences of the two former. From the opposite effects of the two former upon the latter, he deduced all the phenomena of nature. He had some principles also which were peculiar to himself; as that the earth was cold, that the heavens were luminous, that the plants had souls, etc.

*Of the IONIC SECT.*

CLEMENS Berigard, a native of France, was the principal reviver of this sect. After having studied philosophy and physic at Paris and Aix, he was made secretary to the grand dutchess of Tuscany, and afterwards professor at Pisa, and then at Padua. He was a person of a penetrating genius and extensive erudition; and to these talents was added a large share of dissimulation; so that his real opinions were but seldom known: however it is unjustly that he has been ranked among the number of atheists. It is certain, that he taught at Padua and Pisa the whole doctrine of Aristotle, concerning the origin of things, in a manner that rendered his infidelity strongly suspected; but in order to obviate the ill effects of this, he was at the pains of reviving another; namely, that of Anaxagoras, shewing

that the latter had much more rational ideas of the deity than the former. In order to give this opinion still greater force, he dressed up the Ionic system with a great parade of erudition; but still hid some degree of scepticism beneath the splendor of his newly adopted institutions.

*Of the STOIC SECT.*

THIS sect was attempted to be renewed by Justus Lipsius, who makes no small figure among the learned of the seventeenth century. Lipsius was a native of Holland, and educated at Cologne. He chiefly attached himself to the works of Cicero, with a view to imitate his eloquence of style; but he soon after changed his favourite author's method for the more close and nervous manner of Tacitus and Seneca. Turning himself to philosophical enquiries he conceived as much disgust against the absurdities of the school philosophy as pleasure in reading the agreeable precepts of Seneca and Epictetus. He made also a great proficiency in the study of criticism and antiquities; upon which he published, while yet very young, several works that did him honour. He travelled into Italy to encrease his knowledge; but that country being laid waste by the ravages of war, he went speedily to Vienna, and after having resided a short time in this city, he accepted of a professorship at Jena, which he soon relinquished, and went to Cologne, where he married a woman, whose ill temper, in some measure, embittered the remainder of



his life. Being received as doctor of laws at Louvain, he was invited to Lyons to teach the belles lettres; where arriving, he changed to the reformed religion; which, however, he soon abjured again; and leaving that city returned to Cologne to put himself under the protection of the Jesuits of that place, who recommended him to the king of Spain, who appointed him, with a large salary, to be one of the professors of Louvain. It must be confessed, that Lipsius, with all his faults, had a great share of genius and erudition; yet the terseness of his style, and the shortness of his periods, which seem like instantaneous flashes of lightening, in some measure fatigue the reader in the end. Besides what he wrote concerning jurisprudence and polity, he formed a design of re-establishing all the doctrines of the Stoics, as well in physics as in morals; and his works upon this subject are replete with erudition. However, he is not equally successful throughout. In many places he mistook the real spirit of the Stoical maxims; and suffering himself to be dazzled by the high sounding periods, and ungrounded assertions of the sect, he frequently overlooked the latent venom which they concealed. Thus prepossessed in their favour he often inculcates, as true and conformable to christianity, doctrines that are equally prejudicial to revelation and human society. In politics, he endeavoured to aim at the eclectic method; but what he wrote concerning intolerance was answered by many with great force and precision. He pretended to ad-

here strictly to the constancy in action or sufferings which the Stoics professed, and yet in every part of his conduct his actions betrayed the weakness of his opinions. Scioppus and Gataker may be reckoned among the number of his disciples.

*Of the SECT. of DEMOCRITUS and EPICURUS.*

WE may mention cursorily the attempts of one Magenus, a professor of Italy, to revive the opinions of Democritus, and to establish the doctrine of atoms; but the attempt was ineffectual, and scarce deserves a place in the history of learning. But it was otherwise with the endeavours of Gassendi, a canon of Digne, who was one of the most respectable philosophers of his time. Having been first a Peripatetic, he left that sect for the opinions of Epicurus. He was made professor of mathematics at Paris, where he was no less distinguished by his natural genius than by his acquired knowledge, and still more by the moral rectitude of his life. He had read with care all the antients, but particularly the philosophers and mathematicians. He was not so absurd as to adopt Epicurism in its whole extent, and had too much sagacity not to discover the immoral and impious tendency of some of its principles. However, he was of opinion that a system might be formed from it equally adapted to sound philosophy and true religion. He, therefor, built his doctrine upon the foundation of the Atomic philosophy, and made use of the principles of that sect

in such a specious manner that several of the learned preferred his opinion to those of Des Cartes. Thus there was formed a sect of Gassendists, who were held in some degree of reputation, and among whom Bernier, Neure, and Charleton, held the principal places.

*Of the* SECT *of the* MODERN SCEPTICS.

IT may easily be supposed, that numbers, who had long been witnesses of the futility and the arrogance of several sects, should conceive a contempt for all. Their contempt was just; but their conduct was ill founded in rejecting every part of a science, because one part of it was found faulty. They, therefor, set themselves with as much obstinacy to doubt of all opinions, as other philosophers did to maintain them; and they began to infect all reasoning with principles more dangerous than those of the antient Sceptics, as the moderns brought in enthusiasm to support theirs: for as they supposed reason insufficient to guide men to truth, they imagined, to remedy this defect, a sort of divine inspiration illuminated the soul, and guided it in its researches. Among those who professed this system, which was miscalled philosophy, there were several who attempted to revive the syncretism of antiquity, and to unite all sects into one.

WE should be guilty of injustice, if we should tax all the modern Sceptics equally with a design of destroying every science, and thus drawing religion into the general ruin. There were some whose

views were more virtuous, and their opinions just. Some had only a design of restricting human pride, and of confounding the arrogance of some teachers, who gave their slightest surmises for the most infallible proofs. Others were of opinion that there were no means of converting heretics so speedy as that of shewing the insufficiency of reason, and of forbidding its use: thus they introduced Scepticism, in order to strengthen the authority of the church, and to inculcate the necessity of a christian revelation. But the largest and strongest body of the Sceptics only fought with contrary aims to undermine religion, and to give a cover to impiety; and some indeed among them have rather shewn the weakness of human reasoning by their example than by their arguments. In a word, those who embraced Scepticism from motives of modest diffidence, and who doubted only to be informed, were extremely few.

ALL the absurd sophisms and puerile subtleties of the ancient Pyrrhonists were abolished by the modern restorers of the sect, who wisely observed that the times were altered, and that they could gain no proselytes by the subtleties of the ancient schools of Scepticism. They took a more judicious course, beginning by shewing the narrowness of the human understanding; and afterwards by exaggerating the difficulties attending the pursuit of truth, so as to render even the search fruitless. The better to conceal their real designs, they seemed strongly at-



tached to the authority of revealed religion, and ready to submit to the decisions of the church : at the same time, however, they proposed a number of doubts which tended only to shake Christianity, and to invalidate all ecclesiastical subordination. Their chief study was to shew the incompatibility of reason with revelation, so that destroying the one by the other, they left man devoid of principles within, or external direction. It must, notwithstanding, be confessed that the objections of Scepticism have been of service in weakening the arrogance of sectaries, and have put men upon their guard in giving their assent to things which were only supported by the confidence or enthusiasm of the promulgator.

FRANCIS Sauchez, a Portuguese, professed philosophy and medicine at Tholouse, and died in 1632. Being well apprised that the philosophy which he was obliged to teach was fraught with absurdities and contradictions, he was induced to attack it by a small treatise upon science; in which he attempted to prove that we know nothing.

JEROME Hyrnachin, an abbot of one of the monastic orders at Prague, wrote also a treatise, which he entitled *De typho humani generis*, in which, endeavouring to subvert philosophical pride, he attacks reason itself, and disallows the human understanding any power of judging truth.

MONTAGNE is one of the most pleasing and ingenious defenders of Scepticism, and consequently

more dangerous as more seducing. His essays are an immortal performance.

FRANCIS la Motte le Vayer, preceptor to the duke of Anjou, died in 1686. His works are numerous and well known. He was a man of extensive erudition, and wrote well for the time in which he lived. In his sceptical dialogues, however, he has turned the arms of Scepticism against religion under a pretence of defending it.

PETER Daniel Huet, bishop of Avranches, was one of the most learned men of the last age. He was perfectly master of the Latin, Greek, and Hebrew languages, and understood philosophy perfectly, particularly that of the antients. He was a declared enemy of the Cartesian system; and having written a demonstration of christianity, he began to sow the seeds of Scepticism in his *Questiones Alnetanae*; and in the end declared himself an entire convert to the principles of Sextus Empiricus, in his little treatise entitled, *Sur la foiblesse de l'esprit humaine*, or on the weakness of human understanding. He died in 1719.

PETER Bayle, born at Carlat in the province of Foix in France, is by most scholars considered as the greatest genius that ever existed; yet he is for this only the more culpable, as having turned that genius to the most unprofitable purposes. He was in the first part of life a professor at Sedan, and latterly, after the revocation of the edict of Nantz, he was made historical and philosophical professor

at Rotterdam. His disputes with Monsieur Jurieu having deprived him of this employment, he led a private life 'till his death in 1706. We cannot, without injustice, deny him those praises which his learning and penetration merit. His easy manner of writing, and the number of curious and interesting particulars interspersed through his works, will give him credit even with the most remote posterity. His dictionary in particular will still continue to be esteemed; and yet it is a repository for Scepticism, a book in which the doubts of mankind are placed in the strongest light, without any satisfactory solution of them. No book was ever so successful in corrupting the understanding as this; and what is still more deplorable, the venom which tinctures the mind, seldom fails of passing to the heart. Our praises, therefore, of Bayle, and his writings, are in reality ill founded: the greater his beauties, the more dangerous his designs. His whole view is equally to establish both sides of an argument, and so by balancing forces oppose them to each other, 'till both are entirely destroyed. He contrasts without end the truths of reason, and those of revelation; and when he gives the preference to the latter, it is generally in a manner the most cruelly ironical.

§ 2. *Of NEW SECTS introduced.*

We shall mention only three: The Mosaic Sect,

the Theosophic Sect, and the Syncretic, which purposes to unite all the rest.

*Of the MOSAIC SECT.*

THE philosophers of this sect laid themselves out to reconcile reason and revelation, particularly in the account Moses gives us of the creation of things; and from thence to deduce an explication of the phænomena of nature. This was however but a chymical project. The books of sacred writ were not designed to make us philosophers; all their instructions only tend to extricate man from the miseries of sin, and to conduct him to eternal felicity. The Mosaic philosophers, therefor, have only ascribed the reveries of their own minds to the sacred scriptures, without deducing from them any thing that contributes to enlighten or improve the philosophy of nature.

THIS philosophy received the name of Mosaic from the followers of it pretending to discover an explanation of all natural phænomena in the cosmogony of Moses. It also was called the Christian system of nature for the same reason. Among the followers of this opinion we may reckon, not only those who attempted to explain the doctrines of Moses by physical principles, drawn from the sacred text; such as Edmund Dickinson, in his ancient and modern philosophy; and Thomas Burnet, of the Charter-house, much superior to the former both in elegance and erudition; but those also who



have invented particular systems, with a design of accommodating them to the sacred writings; such as John Amos Comenius, a man whose life was as singular as his writings; and John Bayer, an Hungarian divine. These admitted three principles, matter, spirit, and light.

*Of the* THEOSOPHIC SECT.

THEOPHRASTUS Paracelsus, originally of Switzerland, was the author of this. After having travelled into Asia, Africa, and America, and having been initiated into the mysteries of chymistry, he filled the professor's chair at Basle; but he soon left this employment, and boasting the knowledge of many great secrets, he went from place to place, offering his assistance to such as were willing to trust his medicines, which principally consisted of opium and mercury, both of which were at that time little used by the rest of the faculty. He was, without question, a man of uncommon abilities, and great experience, and therefor acquired great reputation; but it was tarnished by many levities, and even great vices. He made many discoveries in chymistry, some of which he communicated to his disciples; but his vanity was insupportable, and his impostures many, both upon the world and even upon himself. His scholars Dornæus, Toxites, Crollius, etc. were little better in these respects than their master; and their writings are very disagree-

able, both for their obscurity, and other defects of style.

PARACELSUS, in explaining his Theosophic system, pretends that God taught man philosophy by an internal light, which was also impressed upon all sublunary beings. He was of opinion that every element had its peculiar inhabitants; that there were three principles of things, salt, sulphur, and what he called the alkahest.

ROBERT Fludd, doctor of physic in London, was a man of a very singular turn of thought. He pretended to know all the mysteries of the cabbala, of magic, and all that it was possible for man to discover in the secret sciences. He grounded his knowledge on two principles; the Septentrional, from whence proceeds condensation; and the Austral, from whence comes rarefaction. He supposed that there were an infinity of intelligences placed above us, to guide or pervert our actions.

JACOB Boehm, otherwise called the philosopher of Germany, was bred a shoemaker at Goerlitz. He had frequent fits of enthusiasm, which, by their ecstasies, lifted him into the Theosophic system. As for his writings they indicate a disturbed mind; nothing can be more enthusiastic; all knowledge he supposes comes from immediate inspiration. Notwithstanding, there is great force of imagination in all his productions. God, according to him, is the essence of essences, and all things are of his creating. This creation however is eternal, proceeding from

God by emanation. Many works are attributed to Boehm which are written by others. He died in the year 1624.

JOHN Baptist Van Helmont, a native of Brussels, was a celebrated physician, and an excellent chymist. He chiefly built his philosophy upon the agency of fire; by means of which, it is said, he effected admirable things. He was, without doubt, a man of great abilities, and of vast erudition, particularly in chymistry. But the desire of striking out something new made him deviate into many strange absurdities; among the number of which, perhaps, his system which attempted to unite philosophy, theosophy, and medicine, may be reckoned. He was an implacable enemy of the philosophy of Aristotle, and built his own upon one first principle, which he imagined to constitute the essence of all things, and to which he gave the name of *Archeus*. This he considered as the original of all things, to which he supposed two other principles subordinate, the *vital air*, and the *seminal image*. He died in the year 1644.

PETER Poiret, of Metz, was at first in holy orders, but he soon was disgusted with a monastic life, and retired to Rheimberg, where he became a disciple of Des Cartes, and afterwards attached himself strictly to the enthusiasms of the celebrated Madamo Bourignon. His works are chiefly written in defence of mystical theology, and he deduces true wisdom from internal inspiration.

To this sect we may also join the famous fraternity of Rosicrucius, which in the seventeenth century was considered as a very considerable body; but which, in reality, never had any existence except in the heated imagination of some men of letters, and was at best but a fiction, invented by some men of repute, who, willing to ridicule the enthusiasm of the times, thus exaggerated their absurdities. It was pretended this fraternity were in possession of extraordinary secrets in chymistry and medicine.

*Of the SYSTEM of SYNCRETISM.*

THE errors of Syncretism, or uniting incompatible systems together, is of ancient standing in the annals of philosophy. Nor is it less dangerous from its influence than its antiquity; nothing being more apt to throw obscurity and confusion upon the reasonings of mankind, than this attempt to reconcile contradictions.

THERE have been some who have attempted to unite the absurdities of the different sects with the purity of the gospel; at the head of whom we may place William Postel, a man of great erudition, though whimsical and capricious to the last degree; Huet, Pausa, Steuchus, and others, have followed the same track with similar success.

SOME philosophers have attempted to reconcile particular sects with each other, such as that of Paracelsus with Galen and Aristotle; and in this



attempt: Wimpinæus and Senertus have made some figure. Others have laboured to unite the opinions of the ancients and moderns, by which Driffamel had some reputation; others the Peripatetics with the Platonists, such as Cantperius and Fox; and lastly, others the ancient Eclectic philosophy with the modern; which attempt was carried as far as it could be by Christian Sturm, professor at Altdorff.

We should not here omit the mentioning some who were entirely for rejecting all philosophy. Of this opinion was Daniel Hoffman, professor of theology, who maintained that the natural light is an enemy to the divine, that all human sciences are productive of sin, and philosophy the work of the flesh. He supported this doctrine with so much obstinacy that he was at last obliged to resign his employment. Wendenhagen, a lawyer, undertook his defence, and the court of Brunswick had no small trouble in allaying this dispute, which Schilling some years after renewed with great warmth and animosity.

## C H A P. II.

### *Of the ECLECTIC PHILOSOPHY.*

**W**E must take care to distinguish the modern Eclectic philosophy, which demands our utmost respect, from the ancient, which was only a

wild, inconsistent jumble of opinions that fell into merited contempt. The renewers of this sect, sensible of the absurdity of the opinions of the Alexandrine school, rightly judged that, to carry on the work of truth with success, it was necessary that the philosopher should first divest himself of all prejudice, to disallow the authority of former great names, and to listen only to the dictates of reason in silence and with assiduity. They endeavoured to draw the justest conclusions from principles which they found the most incontestible. In following this track, they acknowledged nothing to be true upon bare authority, and submitted the most respectable opinions to the rigour of demonstration. This method of philosophizing, which the ancients had a glimpse of, but which either pride or indolence prevented them from practising, was introduced in the seventeenth century; but it was not brought to perfection 'till after many trials, upon account of the prevalence of established opinions. At length, from the united efforts of several great men who flourished in the same period, philosophy assumed that degree of strength and precision which we admire at this day. Of these great masters in the art of human reasoning, some attempted to comprehend the whole circle of science, others were content with elucidating only a part.

§ 1. *Of such PHILOSOPHERS as attempted to improve every Part of Science.*

THE merits of several of those whom we are about to mention are by no means equal, and some are only mentioned merely from their celebrity.

JORDANUS BRUNUS.—He was of obscure extraction, and a native of Nola, in the kingdom of Naples. He was instructed betimes in ancient philosophy and the mathematics, and from this hardy turn of temper he quickly conceived a contempt for the reigning prejudices. Being received into the order of the Dominicans, he could not be induced to accommodate himself to the received opinions; wherefor, quitting the convent, and his native country also in 1582, he resided successively at Geneva, Lyons, Thoulouse, and Paris. In the last-named city he was made a public professor, and there composed several works against the philosophy of Aristotle. However, he soon left this city, together with his employment, and went into Germany, where he resided at Whittemberg, and there renewed his attack against the Peripatetic philosophy. Having taught the Lullistic art for two years at Whittemberg, he travelled to Helmstadt and Francfort, from thence to Great-Britain; from whence he returned into Italy, and at Padua proposed many of his paradoxes with the utmost boldness, attacking at the same time the court of Rome. This was the cause of his being arrested

by the inquisition in the year 1598, as apostatizing from his order; and soon after of his being sent to Rome. Here he was detained for two years in prison, after which he was burnt alive in 1600. He was a philosopher of great talents, but he was too fond of singularity, and did not sufficiently restrain the fire of his imagination. The inconstancy of his character, and the obstinacy of his disposition, rendered his life unhappy, and his death deplorable. He was not only possessed of the most extensive erudition, but of a most surprising degree of penetration, by which he was enabled obscurely to discern several truths which succeeding philosophers brought into light. His great attachment to the Pythagorean philosophy rendered him obscure, and for that reason he seemed disqualified for improving philosophy with success. He left many works behind him, which are all extremely scarce. The chief of them are entitled, *De Infinito Uno*; *Mono* and *Bestia triumphans*.

His philosophy was chiefly founded upon the doctrines of atoms, but he did not consider them in the same light with Epicurus. His doctrine was rather Semi-Pythagorean, and he always prided himself upon his eclectic freedom of sentiment. The number of novelties which he asserted without moderation laid him open to the charge of atheism, to which he fell a victim. He composed a poem containing his philosophy, which only rendered his opinions, naturally difficult, still more obscure. Nor



is he always consistent with himself, but often varies; so that it is not easy to determine what his real sentiments were. He revived the ancient system of emanations, in conformity to which he acknowledged one only substance; but with this difference, that he admitted it not radically but formally; that is, he allowed one substance for the source of all others, and from whence all secondary substances proceeded.

JEROM Cardan.—Cardan was born at Milan, in the year 1501, of an honourable family, and while young was continually subject to severe fits of sickness. When he was in a capacity to receive instructions, his father undertook the task himself, and afterwards sent him to the university to study physic. He took the degree of master of arts at Padua; and being afterwards established at Savona in order to practise his profession, he there married a wife, who made him every way unhappy, both by her own ill temper, and by the irregularities of the children which she brought him. Returning to his native city, he was made professor of physic, with a sufficient salary; but wanting skill in œconomy, he for a long time combated with indigence, and therefor took a resolution of mending his fortune by travel. He therefor went over into Scotland, soon after returned to Bologna, and from thence he went to Rome, where he died in the year 1576, in a state of complete insanity. This man united in his own person the extremes of wisdom and

absurdity: his genius was comprehensive, but his pride immeasurable. He has given us a lively picture of his disposition in the account he hath left us of his own life: there his vanity appears in the most glaring manner, and would scarce be excusable, did we not pardon it by ascribing a part of his follies to a tincture of madness. But whatever his faults might be, his erudition was immense; and he would have succeeded in the project he conceived of reforming philosophy, had he had more prudence and greater fortitude. We find in his treatise *De subtilitate et varietate* many things worthy of our attention. He pretends that the original matter of things exists in the same quantity which it did in the beginning; he rejected a vacuum, and laid down three principles of things, matter, form, and spirit. The elements, according to him, are cold: thus neither the fire could be one, nor light, which in itself contains heat. Three things enter into the composition of all mixed bodies, earth and water as the material substances, and an heavenly warmth which is the active principle. The heavens are in continual fluctuation; the planets are endued with souls; man is not an animal, because granted a reasoning soul; the disposition of sub-lunary things are produced, and may be foretold, by the different aspects of the planets; etc. Julius Cæsar Scaliger was the declared antagonist of Cardan, and attacked his writings with animosity.

FRANCIS BACON.—This great philosopher was a

native of England, and born in the year 1560, of a distinguished family. His talents early began to display themselves, and gained him the favour of queen Elizabeth. Having conceived a disgust for Peripatetic philosophy, while yet but a student at Cambridge, he formed a design of striking into a new path of thinking; and such was his success, that all the modern improvements in philosophy are in a great measure to be ascribed to him. During his residence in France, he made himself perfectly acquainted with political and civil legislation. Upon returning to his native country, he practised the common law, and pleaded at the bar with great success, at the same time never losing sight of his project for the reformation of philosophy. Having published his admirable work *De augmentis scientiarum*, he became a favourite of king James I. and by degrees ascended through the stages of office, till in the year 1619 he was made lord-chancellor of England. He was also created baron of Verulam and viscount St. Albans. These dignities, and a very advantageous marriage, might have rendered his circumstances not only easy but opulent, had he not entirely neglected the care of his private domestic concerns. About this time he published his *Novum organum scientiarum*: but being accused of receiving bribes, he was turned out of his employment, and committed to prison. However, though in some measure convicted of having permitted his servants to take bribes, he was nevertheless par-

done, but not admitted again into favour. He therefor retired to rural privacy, in order to enjoy philosophy alone; but his want of œconomy still attending him, he was frequently driven to the utmost extremities, so as even to implore the king in one of his letters for a trifle to keep him from starving: and in this melancholy manner he ended his life in the year 1626. But though his worldly stores were diminished, he assiduously laboured to encrease his philosophic treasures, and to compose works which will reach the remotest posterity. Born as he was to dissipate the obscurities of the philosophy of the times, he discovered and overturned all the obstacles which contributed to retard the human mind in the progress of truth. He shewed the subordination of one part of learning to another, and the analogy between them; so that to him we owe the *arbor scientiarum*, which has been adopted by succeeding philosophers with great success. It may be said also, that Bacon is the father of modern Eclectic philosophy, from the discoveries which he made of the perfection and imperfection of received systems. His works, however, are not without fault: many new terms, which he makes use of, throw them into obscurity; and their precision is often dry and unentertaining. But these stains soon disappear, if we only regard the utility, importance, and extent of his writings. In him we find numberless observations which even at this day strike the reader with amazement; he seems to have



detected prejudice at its very source; he seems to have foreseen the improvements in natural philosophy: he even turned his views to morals, laying the boundaries between the virtues and vices with great precision, stripping hypocrisy of its mask, assigning to different tempers their different habits, and carefully reducing all his speculations to practice. It is in some measure a loss that the reading of his works is difficult, from the causes above mentioned; but on the other hand, such as have the courage to undertake the perusal will be amply recompensed for their toil. The name of Bacon will, therefor, last as long as the sciences themselves.

THOMAS Campanella.—This philosopher was born in Calabria, in the year 1588. He distinguished himself while yet a youth, both by his genius and erudition; and being received into the order of the Dominicans at Cosenza, he was looked upon as one of the greatest men this order ever produced. Being perplexed by the intricacies of the Scholastic doctrines, he undertook to form a new system, after the example of Telesius. Being come to Naples, he there published a work, entitled, *Philosophy demonstrated by the senses*; where he undertook to refute Aristotle and his followers. This created him many enemies; the number of which he greatly encreased, by venturing to discuss religious subjects with the same freedom as those of philosophy. The surprising erudition, which he discovered in his book *de Sensu rerum*, drew upon

him, from his ignorant enemies, the imputation of conversing with evil spirits; and this accusation, absurd as it was, obliged him to quit Naples. He resided afterwards, for some time, at Bologna, where his books were stolen from him. From thence he went to Padua, where he undertook to revive the doctrines of Empedocles. Then he went to Rome; and from thence back again to Naples; where he professed himself a defender of the catholic faith. But being here accused of a conspiracy against the king of Spain, he was put to the torture; yet, though his torments were inexpressibly severe, they could draw from him no confession of his guilt; and, in fact, he had done nothing to deserve this terrible punishment, unless we look upon some visions which he pretended to have, and some foolish predictions which he pretended to make, as instances of his crimes. He suffered all the cruelties of imprisonment for more than twenty-seven years; and during this time he composed several works. He was at last released and sent to Rome: from thence going to Paris, he died in that city, in the year 1699. Campanella, to the most extensive abilities, joined the most profound erudition; but his judgment was not equal to the force of his imagination. Guided by a variety of fantastic delusions, he became a professor of absurdity, and particularly professed himself a settled believer of judicial astrology. But though he was thus erroneous, yet in his lucid intervals, it must be owned, he was

truly great. He formed the noble design of reforming philosophy; but of the ten volumes which he drew up for this purpose, his private embarrassments only permitted him to publish the first and third. We find in them several controversies relative to the philosophy of Aristotle and Teleſio. He there also proposes many improvements for perfecting and dividing the dialectic of the Peripatetics; but these are rather scholastic distinctions and intricate subtleties that puzzle the mind without informing it. In natural philosophy he chiefly took Teleſio for his guide, grounding all our knowledge of nature in sensation; and this knowledge he divides into a consciousness of the past and of the present, and an anticipation of the future. He asserts, that the essence and the existence of bodies are the same; that space is an incorporeal substance; and that there is no such thing as a vacuum. He gives to matter two active powers, heat and cold; ascribing the formation of the heavens to the first, and of the earth to the latter. All the fire found in our earth, he says, deduces its origin from the sun; and, according to him, the principal dispositions of matter are tenuity and density. The earth he asserts to be immoveable, except that its poles have a sensible trepidation. The soul he thinks it is which forms the organs of every animal. Man is formed of three substances, body, spirit, and intelligence. The world and all its parts are endued with senti-

ment; and have what he calls primitive qualities, such as love, power, wisdom, etc.

THOMAS Hobbes.—This philosopher was born at Malmesbury, in England, in the year 1588, and may be reckoned among the number of early geniusses. Having been appointed to attend a young nobleman in his travels, he thus had the opportunities of visiting France and Italy. Upon his return, he judiciously declined wasting his time in studying school philosophy, but applied himself closely to Greek and Latin literature; and being admitted to the friendship of the Great Bacon, he assisted him in the translation of his works. He was peculiarly successful in this branch of literature; and also translated Thucydides in English. His dislike to the philosophy of the schools every day encreasing, he embraced the Eclectic system: then travelled into Italy to complete himself in mathematical studies, with which he intended to strengthen his other knowledge. From thence he revisited Paris, where he formed connections with the most celebrated personages then in France. Upon his return into England, he applied himself to the study of political and civil legislation, in hopes of remedying the terrible evils that then oppressed his country. The result of his studies was his two great works entitled the *Citizen* and the *Leviathan*, in which he endeavoured to support the kingly prerogative with great shew of subtilty and argumentation. This brought upon him from those of republican principles a per-



secution which obliged him to quit England, and once more to go over into France in 1640, where he became so much the favourite of the men in power, that he was chosen preceptor to Charles II. the banished king, and who afterwards sat upon the throne. Several new opinions, which he soon after broached in his writings, rendered him obnoxious to the bishops of France; and, having been suspected of a secret correspondence with Cromwell's party, the royal family turned him out of his employment, so that he was obliged to return into England once again, where being received into the family of the duke of Devonshire, he there availed himself of his retirement to improve his philosophical researches. His next publication was a system purely Eclectic, in which he employed the geometric manner of reasoning. The doctrines were not without partizans, but were notwithstanding strongly opposed, particularly by the clergy. In a very advanced age he chose for his retreat a retirement in the country, where he died in 1679, having lived a bachelor. He departed greatly in his opinions from the philosophy that had been received in the schools, and laid down other principles which are explained in his elements of philosophy. What gave particular displeasure in his writings was the political tenets which he attempted to introduce. Here follows an abridgement of his doctrines. All our ideas are originally derived from the senses, and the objects around us are the causes of our sensati-

ons, the sensible qualities only resulting from the different modifications of matter. No human action is the effect of any natural or essential predilection, but merely instantaneous. All that we are capable of imagining is finite: thus the name of God answers none of our ideas, and is only a title of honour given to that being which we conceive superior to all others. Our most profound reflections can never go beyond the bounds of sensation. True and false are expressions, the reality of which we cannot demonstrate. Reason is acquired in man by habit. We love what we desire, and our will is nothing but the last object of our appetite. The obtaining the desired object produces happiness. As for virtue, it merits our adherence from the excellence of its effects: it consists in the art of justly chusing between the different objects of our desires when they are compared with each other. Power is the sum of the different means which are proper for acquiring good; and the greatest power consists in the single possession of the greatest quantity of those means. All our inquietudes and anxiety arise from an ignorance of the causes which produce them; and religion is the effect of that fear which we have of invisible beings. The natural equality of mankind serves as a foundation for obtaining the objects of desire even to the prejudice of others; and from thence proceeds the acquisition of property. The natural state of mankind is a state of war, which can only cease by

mutual compact; so that there is nothing of itself either just or unjust, and no property in a state of nature. The natural law is nothing more than a liberty of using the greatest degree of force in acquiring the greatest share of happiness. Liberty consists in the absence of external obstacles. All men have naturally a right to all things; but their real interests will incline them to seek for peace, and to acknowledge a subjection to those rights which tend to render men secure, and to promote public tranquillity.

RENES Descartes.—Descartes was born in Tourain, in 1596. After the ordinary course of study he applied himself to mathematics with good success. The dialectic that was at that time taught in the schools having appeared unworthy of his attention, he undertook the search after truth by following the method of geometricians. His contempt for school philosophy for some time made him incline to scepticism, and turned his studies chiefly upon topics of polite literature. But some men of penetration, who at that time resided at Paris, with whom he had cemented a friendship, brought him back to his philosophical pursuits; and although he followed the profession of arms, yet in his tent he made philosophy and mathematics the amusements of his leisure. It was in this situation that he studied all the philosophical works which were then in reputation, not even excepting the reveries of the Theosophists, from whom perhaps he acquired

his passion for hypothesis. After having made some campaigns, he went back to Paris, and turned all his thought upon his design of forming an universal system of the sciences. He travelled into Italy with a view of completing himself in his studies, and again returned to France, where he secluded himself in retirement, only keeping up a strict correspondence with the fathers of the oratory at Paris. But not thinking himself sufficiently at liberty in this country to publish his new discovered systems, he went into Holland, where he completed his anatomical and mathematical researches, and there published his treatise upon method, which gave him great reputation, and introduced him to the friendship of Regnier and Deventer. Having taken an house at Egmont, he resided there for several years, all this time assiduously employed in unfolding the principles of his philosophy, in refuting his adversaries, and in explaining it to such as desired a further illustration. Although he was an extraordinary philosopher, and justly merits the title of being its restorer, yet geometry was properly speaking his main *fort*; and the too frequent use he makes of it in his works was, perhaps, one of the sources of his greatest errors. But notwithstanding his faults, as his philosophy was at once both new and well supported, greatly surpassing that which he undertook to reclaim, he was followed by many of the learned, and several of them undertook to teach the Cartesian system. Among the number



Le Roy seems to be one of the most zealous and expert: he publicly taught this new philosophy at Utrecht, from whence it made its progress to Leyden and Amsterdam, notwithstanding all the efforts of Voetius to oppose it. At Groningen, however, it was not so successful. In France the fathers of the oratory supported it with all their interest, and the Jesuits laboured as strenuously to oppose it. Descartes, seeing his reputation thus rising at home, made his last visit to France, where he had a conference with Gassendi. These two extraordinary men in some measure compromised their differences on philosophical subjects, and united their systems into one. At this time Christina, queen of Sweden, began to make a figure in the learned world, and testified a desire of seeing Descartes. She at length prevailed upon him to come to her court; and he accordingly went to Stockholm, where the first convert he made to his system was the queen herself. His death, which happened soon after, in 1650, prevented him from pursuing his success. Descartes will ever be reckoned an extraordinary man; and although he seemed rather to destroy the errors of the ancient philosophy, in order to establish new errors of his own, yet his putting men in the right pursuit of truth by his example will ensure his reputation to posterity. His aim was to level down all former systems, and to build one up from their ruins, regardless of authority; but his impetuosity carried him beyond the mark. He supposed that

he could bring all nature to submit to calculation; and thus he built a world, and formed man upon geometrical, yet false principles. It would seem in many places that he himself perceived the falsehood of the paradoxes he was daily producing; but he was unwilling to lose his labour in inventing them. To his philosophical talents he added also those of a delicacy of sentiment, an intrepidity of soul, and elevation of mind. His letters give us the best indications of his penetration and real merit; and, if he seems to have any faults, it is because some are ever incident to humanity. As to the detail of his philosophical tenets, we have room to give but a very succinct account of them. He has, it is true, given name to a sect; but his system has suffered divers alterations from those who undertook to explain it. His first successes were in Holland, where his sentiments were espoused by many philosophers as well as divines; the most celebrated are Wittichius, Claubergius, Gouffet, Roell, Ray, and Becker: but some of these attempting to unite Cartesianism with theology, were strongly opposed, and in some measure overthrown. Of the opposers we have the names of Voetius already mentioned, Des Marets, Mastricht, Spanheim, and Leidekker, who openly arraigned the principles of Descartes of impiety, and obtained divers decrees of the synods against them. These disputes were carried to a very high pitch, and produced fatal effects, so that the public authority was scarcely sufficient to re-

press them. In the end, however, the Cartesian philosophy lost much of that splendor which it had acquired in the beginning. It made its way slowly into the university of Leipsick, and was soon after entirely abolished. In the Spanish Netherlands it was taught with great success by Le Grand. In England it was scarce paid any attention to, as the philosophers of that country were taken up with the newly-broached hypotheses of Hobbes, Digby, and some others. In France, Huet and the Jesuits did all that lay in their power, to stop its progress; but they were opposed with vigour by Clerfelier, Bosfuet, Regis, and Montmor: at last, however, the royal edict interposed, and publicly prohibited its being taught in France. It was also prohibited in the same manner in Italy.

IN logics, Descartes has advanced nothing new; but he has done the art of reasoning much service by introducing the mathematical method, and recommending it as the only one most likely to advance the study of philosophy. With regard to morals, he did not turn his thoughts that way 'till towards his death, as his treatise of the passions more properly belongs to natural philosophy than to ethics. We find many deep metaphysical researches in his *Meditations*, and *Philosophical Principles*. He begins all philosophical enquiry by doubting of all things, and then begins to lay the first principle of certitude, *I think, therefore I am*. From thence he infers that thought was known to us before the ob-

jects of our thoughts, and that, therefor, thinking substance is much more apparent to our minds than corporeal or extended substance. Rising from these to more general ideas, he discovers one which must include self-existence, and this is God, who necessarily exists without a cause. God is a being truly infinite, incapable of being deceived himself or of deceiving others. Whatever objects we have clear ideas of are to us true. There are two kinds of thinking; the representations of the understanding, and the acts of the will. The imagination furnishes ideas to the first, desire produces the determinations of the other. And prejudice he holds to be the source of all error.

As to the natural philosophy of Descartes, he begins it by observing that space and matter are the same, and always connected in the understanding. He denies the existence of atoms, or of particles indivisible in their own nature, and asserts that the world hath no limits. He derives all the varieties which are seen in matter from motion alone, of which God is the only cause, who has created and still preserves a determinate quantity of motion in the universe. All motion is rectilinear, and never alters that direction except from external obstacles. Every body endeavours to continue in a state of rest or of motion, and this in proportion to the magnitude of the body, or the swiftness with which it tends to move. As to astronomy, Descartes admitted the Copernican system, as being the most



simple. He supposed the whole celestial matter was an immense vortex, in the midst of which the sun had his place. Round him the heavenly bodies formed their revolutions, in such a manner that the great vortex still contained several smaller vortexes, each belonging to its respective planet. There are three elements, from whence proceed all changes in bodies, and by which may be explained all the phenomena of nature.

DESCARTES gained no small advantage from reading the ancients, with whose works he was perfectly acquainted; but he discovered many things also of which they were ignorant. To him posterity owe the obligations of having conducted on the way to truth, though he was not able to attain that amiable object himself. His novelties, as may be supposed, drew on him the imputation of atheism, but of this he may be readily acquitted. As to his opinion concerning the souls of brutes, it can scarcely be conceived that he adopted it seriously.

GODFREY William Leibnitz.—This philosopher was born at Leipsick, in 1646. As if in some measure born a philosopher, he testified extraordinary marks of genius even in childhood; and, after having passed through the usual course of school education with surprising rapidity, he put himself under the tuition of the celebrated Thomasius; in mathematics he had the no-less-famous Weigelius for his master; and Bose taught him history. To these instructions he added the most laborious ap-

plication in private, studiously comparing ancient and modern philosophy, and jurisprudence. Having received a doctor's degree at Altdorff, his merit introduced him to the favour of the baron Boinebourg. About this time he published his new method of studying jurisprudence, and gave a new edition of Nizolius, with a preface of his own which was better than the book to which it was added. He early began to be sensible of his own talents, and the necessity there was for their exertion in the improvement of natural philosophy; but he was resolved previously to travel, in order to fit him for this undertaking. He first went to Paris; and after to London, where he acquired a taste for geometry, the depths of which he soon fathomed; and so great was his proficiency in this science, that it is to this day doubted whether the world is more obliged to him or to Newton for the discovery of the doctrine of infinites or fluxions, though perhaps they both have equal claim to this honour, as two men have often been known to have hit upon the same invention at the same time. Be this as it will, the reputation of Leibnitz every day encreased; he was invited to several courts, and at last accepted of the offers of that of Brunswick, where he was invested with an honourable employment. But though he was in some measure involved in affairs of state, yet this did not interrupt his literary occupations; and during this time he was taken up in perfecting his *Arithmetical Machine*. In the year

1677, he was made one of the council in the state of Hanover, and here he published a treatise upon the rights of the German princes; a work from which he received great honour. It would be impossible here to inumerate all that this philosopher did to extend the bounds of science, The *Acta Eruditorum* contain many pieces written by him, instances at once of great penetration and learning. He was persuaded by the Elector his master to take a literary journey, in order to collect materials to serve towards writing an history of the house of Brunswick. At the same time he composed his diplomatic code, a work tending to settle the law of nations. He also meditated the great design of fixing a new set of philosophical principles; and he undertook to explain one of the most difficult problems in nature, namely the union of the soul and body. Among other princes by whom he was honoured, we may reckon Frederic I. king of Prussia, to whom he proposed the institution of a royal society at Berlin; and it was accordingly erected in the year 1700. The credit which he had at the Imperial court also induced him to make the same attempt there, but it was ineffectual. These labours, however, by no means exhausted him. While he supported a literary correspondence, the most extensive that was ever before kept up by a man of learning, he was at the same time forming works that required great labour and application; the most noted of which is his Theodicee, wherein he

explains the origin of evil with greater precision than was done before him. In this manner his whole life was spent in the investigation of truth, and the promotion of human felicity; and, after having lived in celibacy, he died in 1716, with the reputation of being the most universal scholar that was ever known.

ALTHOUGH his merits were so extraordinary, he never seemed to desire to found a sect: he was rather more pleased with improving philosophy than gaining renown.

IN logic he shewed that simple ideas were clear, but undefinable because of their perspicuity. He perfectly explained the nature of definition, in shewing that it consisted in determining the possibility of things, and from this possibility or impossibility truth and falsehood had their origin.

IN metaphysics his *Monades* make a principal figure. These he supposed to be substances perfectly simple, exempt from all composition, indestructible, unalterable, and differing from each other in their degrees of force alone. From this force the difference of all bodies arises; so that there is not in all nature two bodies entirely alike, for, if there were such, their identity would make them but one. These monades he supposed to be in continual change, as their internal powers are continually operated upon by the relation they stand into several others around them. The transient state of a monade he calls its perception, its



permanent state its *apetition*. Thus he supposes that each monade has a distinct soul of its own, though we chiefly reserve the term to be applied to those bodies which have distinct perceptions. He acknowledges God to be the source of all existence and essences, and that his own existence is not only possible but necessary. From him therefor the monades proceed, and from the aggregate of these all the bodies with which we are conversant here on earth. When the monade acts, it produces distinct ideas; when it is passive, the ideas are confused. In the one case bodies are represented perfectly, as in a mirror; in the other, they are scarcely reflected at all. Nothing dies in nature, bodies are in a perpetual flux, and what we usually call death is only the destruction of the organical combinations. The union of the body and soul consists in a certain pre-established *harmony*, God foreseeing from all eternity the analogy between some certain bodies and some certain souls, so as to join upon all occasions the fitted soul to the corresponding body.

SIR Isaac Newton.—This incomparable man was born at Wolltrop, in Lincolnshire, in the year 1642. He entered Trinity college, Cambridge, in 1660. There are proofs of his having made several profound researches in geometry at the early age of twenty-four; and even then of his having laid the foundations of his two principal works, his *Principia* and his *Optics*. However, he modestly diffided of his talents at that time, and kept up his designs

\*till age and reflection should appreciate their value. At length, in the year 1687, he was resolved to print his discoveries, and accordingly published his *Mathematical principles of natural philosophy*. This work, in which the most profound geometry serves as the base of a system of physics perfectly new, was not at first received with all the applause it merited: but, when it came to be sufficiently known, all the suffrages which he slowly obtained joined at once in exclamations of applause. Two theories principally predominate in this work, namely, that of the doctrine of central forces, and the resistance of bodies moving through fluid mediums, both entirely new, and the subject illustrated by the force of sublime geometry. These subjects cannot now be treated of by another without either repeating Newton's words, or diminishing from their force and precision. Attraction and space, both banished from natural philosophy by Descartes, were restored by Newton: yet, though these great men differed in several respects, in many instances their sentiments strongly corresponded. They both entertained a just contempt for the subtilities of the schools: they were both admirable geometers, and saw the expediency of introducing it into physics; and both created systems that were never touched upon by others.

WHILE Newton was thus employed in perfecting his *Principia*, he still laboured at another performance, equally original, though of a less general

extent. This was his Optics, or his treatise upon lights and colours, which first appeared in the year 1704. This treatise was founded upon experiments made by the author for the thirty years preceding, all equally tending to elucidate the principles of this science, and to anatomize, if we may so express it, the rays even of light; so that Newton may be regarded as the original inventor of this whole doctrine. But he was not confined to the speculative principles of the art alone; he made an improvement in the mechanical part of optics, the reflecting telescope being entirely of his invention, though it was improved by several succeeding artists. This treatise upon optics he left unfinished, his experiments being interrupted, and being either unwilling or unable to renew them. He was chosen professor of mathematics at Cambridge in 1669, and was chosen one of the deputies who were sent to court to support its privileges, and also a member to represent the university in parliament. At the intercession of the earl of Halifax with king William, he was made treasurer of the mint in the year 1696, and was very serviceable in a new coinage which was then set forward. Three years after he was made master of the mint, the revenue of which employment was very considerable, and which he enjoyed 'till his death. In 1703 he was elected president of the royal society, and held that honour without interruption for twenty-two years. He was made a knight by the queen in 1705. He was

held in still higher consideration under George the first, and the princess of Wales, who was afterwards queen, gave him the kindest marks of her esteem. Above all other philosophers, Newton had the singular pleasure of enjoying his reputation while living. All the learned of England placed him at their head, as if by an unanimous suffrage. His philosophy was adopted by the whole body of his countrymen; and it prevailed through all the writings of the royal society as if already consecrated by a long succession of ages. In a word, he was honoured while living to such a degree, that death itself could not encrease his reputation. In the year 1699, when the members of the academy of science at Paris were to chuse a foreign associate, they unanimously turned their eyes upon Newton. This great philosopher also placed his talents to the improvement of chronology, of which he composed a system, not so solid indeed as that of his Principia, yet still worthy of him. In this manner he continued improving mankind, and reaping the fruit of his labours, for several years. He lived to the age of eighty-five, and enjoyed during that whole term, all but the last five years, the most perfect and uninterrupted health. He died the 28th of March, 1727.; his funeral being performed with a splendor equal to that of persons of the most high rank. He lived in celibacy, and left considerable possessions to his heirs. He was fond of solitude, and did not chuse to be interrupted in his studies;



but in other respects he was affable and kind. He preferred retirement even to glory, but had the singular advantage of enjoying both at the same time.

CHRISTIAN Thomafius.—This philosopher was born at Leipfic in 1655. His father James Thomafius, who was himself a profound scholar, gave him a proper education, and, as soon as he was capable of understanding them, explained to him the best works that were written upon natural law, such as Grotius, Puffendorff, Ziegler, etc. This laid a foundation at once for his ambition and his future excellence. He was still farther improved by the lectures of Stryke; and he at last gave lectures himself, in which, without following any former system, he selected what he thought best from all with an eclectic freedom. He published his Institutions of Jurisprudence, in which he followed the principles of Puffendorff, but at the same time freed the science from a multitude of scholastic absurdities that had grown up with it, and were but an excrescence upon its utility. This, however, brought on a persecution against him from others who taught this science in a different manner, and they succeeded so far as to procure a prohibition to hinder him from teaching. Thomafius therefor went from Leipfic to Halle, where he was followed by numbers of auditors; and this induced the elector of Brandenbourg to establish an university in that city, of which he made Thomafius one of the prin-

cipal professors, from which he rose to be principal, and afterwards privy counsellor. Which post he held 'till his death in 1728. He was a man who united a great share of genius to the most profound learning and the most unshaken fortitude, ever as ready to combat error as industrious in its discovery; but he was rather too satirical, a lover of paradoxes, and was suspected of being a favourer of scepticism. However, he was of the greatest service to his country, in being the most active of all her philosophers in banishing the errors of the sects with which Germany was at that time over-run.

CHRISTIAN WOLFF.—This philosopher was born at Bréslau the 24th of January, 1679. Having gone through the previous steps of education at home, he went in the year 1696 to Leipstick, where he applied himself to mathematics and natural philosophy under Mr. Harberger. He was at first designed for the church, and preached for some time. In the year 1703, he took up his residence in Leipstick, and became an assistant to Mr. Mencke in compiling the *Acta Eruditorum*. About this time he contracted an intimacy with Leibnitz, who was highly pleased with his dissertation upon universal practical philosophy, treated in a geometrical method. The irruption of the Swedes into Saxony in 1709 obliged Mr. Wolff to seek another retreat, and going to Halle, he there became professor of mathematics, giving at the same time lectures in natural philosophy and other parts of

learning. A work which he published in 1709, entitled *Aërometria*, procured him great reputation. The succeeding year brought forth his elements of mathematics, which is reckoned one of the best books in that way. The royal societies of London and Berlin did him the justice which he merited in chusing him for one of their members; and the progress of his reputation procured him several advantageous offers. Peter the Great invited him to Petersburgh, with the promise of a competent salary; but Wolff, by the advice of his friend Leibnitz, preferred his situation at Halle. A treatise of metaphysics, written in German, contributed to secure that reputation he had already acquired; but with fame it also procured him envy. The divines of Halle opposed him with much animosity; but, though their opposition might have been sufficient to another, Wolff disregarded it, and refused to leave Halle, still continuing to write and lecture as usual. At length, however, the king of Prussia was prevailed upon to believe the calumnies propagated against him, and Wolff had orders to leave Halle in eight and forty hours. He obeyed, and retired to Marbourg, where the university gave him that welcome reception which it had often in vain offered before. Here he began his public lectures in 1724; and the period of his residence here was the most brilliant of his life, as it was the scene on which he produced his great Latin works upon philosophy, in which the proofs and principles of

things are carried farther than had ever been known to former philosophers. And so great a degree of reputation did his merit procure him, that the academy of sciences at Paris chose him as one of their foreign associates in 1733.

BUT he was to receive a still greater pleasure in triumphing over his opposers; for the present king of Prussia had no sooner ascended the throne than he pressed Mr. Wolff to return to Halle in so kind a manner that it was impossible for him to resist; and he accordingly made his solemn entry into that city in the year 1741, from whence he had been banished about seventeen years before. He was now not only reinstated in the dignities he had lost, but made privy counsellor, vice chancellor of the university, and after the death of Mr. Ludwig he became chancellor. And some time after, the elector of Bavaria raised him to be one of the barons of the empire.

THE metaphysical works of Mr. Wolff were followed by his volumes upon the law of nations and the moral law. He had in this department of science etched out the oeconomic duties: there only remained the political when death interrupted his designs in 1754. Wolff may be considered as the first philosopher who gave morals all the certitude of mathematics. He followed the system of Leibnitz, but added many things of his own; and if his system cannot be called a repository of truth,



yet it certainly is the only guide that can conduct us to it.

§ 2. *Of those PHILOSOPHERS whose Object was only the Illustration of some particular Science.*

IT would be impossible within the compass which we have prescribed ourselves to give an account of all the attempts which have been made to reform or advance any particular part of philosophy: such can be only attained in a complete and circumstantial history; and recourse must be had to the more voluminous productions of this nature. We shall only, therefor, mention a few of these attempts, which will serve to guide the enquirer in his researches upon this subject; and, instead of mentioning the names of all our modern philosophers, content ourselves with the most celebrated.

### Of LOGIC.

THEY who undertook the reformation of logic began with very warm controversies, in which one side attempted to impugn, the other to vindicate, the subtilties of school philosophy. The principal opposers of the Aristotelian logic were Valla Agricola, Nizolius, and Vivez, concerning whom the reader may have ample information in the biographical dictionaries. There were some philosophers who also undertook to unite the art of rhetoric with that of logic, so that rules for thinking might guide us to those of speaking. This produced some ele-

gant productions, but made no improvements in the methods of reasoning.

WE may place at the head of those who distinguished themselves in this study the celebrated Petrus Ramus, a native of Vermandois, in France, and sprung from noble though reduced parents. He was therefor compelled to enter as a servant in the college of Navarre, having no time to study but night when his daily occupations were over, and no other light than that of a lamp which served to illuminate a passage. Nevertheless, he made the most considerable progress, particularly in dialectics and mathematics, to which he principally applied. He was not yet thirty when he published his remarks upon Aristotle, in which he corrected his dialectics in many places. He soon after composed a system of logic upon his own principles, which gave so much offence to the doctors of the university that they cited him before the civil tribunal, and a day and judges were appointed for hearing the cause. The result was, that Ramus was cast, and prohibited from either publishing or lecturing. Notwithstanding this, in the succeeding year he was chosen professor of rhetoric; and, Henry II. coming to the throne, he was made professor not only of eloquence but of mathematics and philosophy. During the civil wars occasioned about this time by religion, he was obliged to fly to obscurity, and kept himself concealed during the first and second war. When the third war broke

out in 1568, he took refuge in Germany, from whence however returning, he was murdered in the massacres of St. Bartholomew, in 1572. Ramus was a man of very extraordinary talents, and perfectly versed in the writings of antiquity, which gave him a superiority over many of his cotemporary writers. However, his fondness for innovation has often made him quit truth for its appearance, and substitute words for things. What first induced him to correct logic was the dialectic of Plato, which he found in some measure connected with eloquence, which the logic of Aristotle tended rather to destroy. He therefor launched out against the Peripatetics with ungovernable vehemence, and this raised him enemies equally steady in opposition and resentment. It is unnecessary to enter into a detail of the subtilties which he introduced into the art; for notwithstanding all their former renown they are at present fallen into merited oblivion. He had one design, however, which, though he could not effect, was in reality praise-worthy. This was to make logic not only useful in science, but even in practice at the bar, and thus to turn what was formerly an empty science into a beneficial art, which procured him a very great concourse of auditors, who came from all parts to hear him, and among whom there were some eminent for their learning, as in France Audomar Taleus; and in Germany Frejus and Fabricius; to whom we may add Sturm and Chytræus, at whose instance the

Ramistic logic was received into the German universities. This innovation was attended with infinite contention; and the disputes between the supporters of Aristotle and Ramus arose almost to civil war, particularly when it was attempted to introduce the opinions of Ramus into the practice of the bar. This gave occasion to Melancthon to attempt a new system of logic, in which he professed to reform the errors both of Aristotle and Ramus. And some went still farther, and attempted to reconcile the logic of Ramus with that of Melancthon. This logic went by the name of the Philippo-Ramistic system. The principal authors of these attempts are Beurhusius, Frisius, Buscherus, Polanus, Libavius, Keckermannus, Goclenius, and Alstedius. Their labours in some measure kept the school philosophers divided until the Cartesians came to overturn both Melancthon and Ramus.

THE Cartesians also were not less assiduous in the cultivation of logic, upon which their master had only furnished some general principles. Among them we find the names of Accoutius, Le Grand, Claubergius, Regis; but particularly the great Arnold and Malebranche, who for a long time supported a very warm controversy. Malebranche rendered his name immortal by his excellent work entitled *De la recherche de la vérité*, or an enquiry after truth. His remarks upon the errors of sense and imagination are excellently adapted for guiding men to the forming of sound judgments,



and reasoning with propriety. His works written against Arnold are by no means of equal value: that very imagination, which he took so much pains to combat, in some measure seduced him, and hurried him beyond the bounds of moderation.

We may here also mention the names of two other great men, to whom logic owes many obligations, John Locke and Tschirnhausen. The treatise of the latter, entitled *Medicina mentis*, contains the general principles of arithmetic, geometry, and what is called the *Ars inveniendi*. The essay upon human understanding, of the former, is a work that researches deeply into the nature of the mind and its operations. We there find at once the most exact history of the thinking principle within us, and the most proper means of perfecting and discovering the use of our faculties. When we compare these works with those of the preceding age, we cannot sufficiently admire the rapid progress of the human mind in the pursuit of truth.

#### Of NATURAL PHILOSOPHY.

THE attempts to unite the former researches of philosophers into an eclectic system were begun almost at the revival of letters. Telesio set an example, which was followed by many illustrious men, of whom we have had already occasion to speak; such as Jordanus Brunus, Cardan, Bacon, Campanella, Hobbes, Descartes, Leibnitz, etc. The Telesian academies were propagated through Italy,

and some men of learning carried this taste of philosophizing into France and England. Of this number were Baranzanus, La Palisse, Espagnet, Charpentier, and Gilbert. The university of Paris, at that time in a very flourishing condition, and highly respected, contributed to give this philosophy reputation; and Senertus did all that lay in his power to introduce a right method of treating the science of nature. These endeavours were not without success. Numberless were the attempts to extend philosophy by experiment; and soon several societies were formed for the propagation of chymistry, mathematics, astronomy, and mechanics: and from hence the royal society in London, and the academy of sciences in Paris, took their rise.

THE English now began greatly to improve the art of chymistry. Digby at that time made no mean figure, though perhaps at this day but little regarded. He was succeeded by Thomas; but they were both eclipsed by Robert Boyle, one of the most judicious and industrious naturalists of his age.

NOR did astronomy want its cultivators. At the head of these we must incontestably place Copernicus, who in correcting the system of Philolaus, and destroying that of Ptolemy, laid his system upon such a firm basis that all succeeding discoveries have only contributed to confirm it. Tycho Brahe was not so fortunate, as he endeavoured to accommodate his system to appearances, and was led to sub-

mit his judgment to a mistaken reverence for what he supposed was contained in scripture. The name of Kepler is not less famous in astronomy than either of the former, whose principles, analogy, and observations, served to guide succeeding astronomers, and particularly Newton. Galileo would have been the glory of his native city Florence, but the persecutions he suffered there from their mistaken zeal for religion now make him their shame. Posterity gives him now dead that applause which his countrymen refused while living; and he may be called a great man in the strictest sense of the expression.

GEOMETRY made no inconsiderable progress by the endeavours of Vincentius, Harriot, Descartes, Willis, Fermat, and Huygens; but it was still carried to greater lengths, and in a manner transformed, by Newton and Leibnitz.

THIS happy period produced many important discoveries in the sciences: such was the circulation of the blood, ascribed to Harvey; and that of the lymphatic vessels, to Assellius. But what chiefly facilitated the study of nature was the invention of those instruments by which a new universe in a manner was opened to the philosopher's inspection. There are none who now are unacquainted with the admirable use of telescopes, microscopes, barometers, thermometers, the air pump, the electrical machine, etc.

THOSE learned societies whom we have already mentioned multiplied experiments, and that with

so much precision as the ignorant could scarce conceive. The first of these societies was that of Telefio, founded at Cosenza. The number of these soon encreased surprisngly in Italy, among which that of Florence, and that at Bologna, are principally distinguished. The royal society of London has also contributed to extend natural knowlege without intermission since its establishment, as its transactions testify. The academy of sciences at Paris have not been remiss; and its memoires, which have been drawn up by the great Fontenelle, are the most precious repository of natural knowlege. Berlin, Petersbourg, Upsal, etc. have all been serviceable in the same pursuit, and have benefited mankind by their labours.

#### *Of* METAPHYSICS.

THE school philosophers had long treated this science without success. Succeeding metaphysicians were obliged to go farther back to the true sources of our knowlege, of which the former had no idea. Leibnitz and Wolff in this respect were probably unequalled; and they performed all that can be expected from human abilities in this science. Natural theology, which is the most sublime as well as the most important branch of metaphysics, took under their hands a new form, and teemed with fresh proofs of the existence of a deity: these furnished arms to the believer to defend his own opi-



nions, and to destroy the sophisms of atheism and incredulity.

Of all those who opposed religion, perhaps, Spinoza is the most celebrated. He was a Jew of Amsterdam, who pretended to give a demonstration of the existence of the one great Being, by which however he meant only the universe. He founded his opinions upon a false definition of substance, and this erroneous principle led him to consequences which must necessarily fall with the principle that supports them.

THIS latter age has also produced all that can be said concerning psychology or the doctrine of the human soul, and pneumatology or the doctrine of spirits. Several parts however of this science, which were once the object of warm contention, are now totally disregarded; such the enquiry concerning the nature of spectres, magic and demons. The works of Belthazar Bekker made some noise in their time, but they are now unknown, because the superstitions which they combat are entirely obliterated. In closing this account we are not to pass over the merits of the late abbe de Condillac, who has fathomed metaphysics with great depth of thought and perspicuity of expression. The Germans also have taken some pains to illustrate the works of Leibnitz and Wolff, and enriched their observations with many new and important truths. Among these improvers we may reckon the name of Baumgarten.

## Of MORALITY.

ALTHOUGH there is much said upon this subject in the works of Montaigne, Charron, and La Motte le Vayer, yet it is so blended with trifles, absurdity and scepticism, that these authors must by no means be admitted among the number of those who have improved the science of morality. The purest fountain from whence we can derive this science is from the works of those who have treated upon the law of nature; and upon this subject Grotius and Puffendorff deserve the highest esteem.

GROTIUS was a native of Holland, and even at the age of seventeen gave marks of his future greatness. He advanced by degrees through different employments in the state, 'till accused of being concerned with Barnevelt he was thrown into prison, where he might have perhaps remained his whole life, had not his wife procured his enlargement by means of a large box which she pretended to his keepers was filled with books. Upon leaving prison he took refuge in France, and there composed that immortal work entitled *De jure belli & pacis*, or the law of peace and war, which was published in 1625. He there expounds the principles and the rules of natural duty, and applies it to societies. This work has been frequently reprinted, translated, and commented. The fame of Grotius having reached Sweden, Gustavus Adolphus invited him to the court of Stockholm; and this prince dying soon

after, Christina, his successor, sent Grotius as her ambassador to the court of France. In this station he composed several works, all excellent in their kind; but being recalled to Stockholm, he died on his return at Rostock, in 1645. Grotius was one of the greatest men not only of his own but any other age. He united at once the most extensive learning, the greatest penetration, the most persuasive eloquence, and the most agreeable manner of writing. In imitation of him, Selden also undertook to treat of the law of nature, and of nations, following the principles of the Hebrews.

PUFFENDORFF was born in Lusatia in 1631. He availed himself of the labours of Grotius, but took a different course from him in attaching himself in some measure to the system of Hobbes. He also borrowed some of his notions from the advocate Weigelius. His elements of universal jurisprudence are greatly admired, and procured him the place of first professor of this science in the university of Heidleberg. Some time after, being invited to Lund, in Sweden, he there composed his great work of the law of nature and of nations, which, instead of praise, at first drew upon him the invectives of Schwartz a theologian, and Becman an advocate, who collected a list of his errors and innovations. Some Saxon divines also joined in the opposition. But Puffendorff answered them with great force, and, as he had more learning and genius than they, came off victorious. The court

of Berlin at length rewarded his merits with the post of historiographer to the king. He died in 1694.

THE performances both of Grotius and Puffendorff have received much benefit from the excellent notes of Barbeyrac.

### *Of POLITICS.*

THIS science began, like all the rest, to flourish at the revival of letters, and of all others received most assistance from the Peripatetic philosophy, which seems to have furnished the principles upon which it is founded. Bodin and Boccalini have written upon the nature of a commonwealth; and though in their works we find much error and superfluity, yet in many places have they been very successful. After them came Machiavel, whose name is odious among politicians, but who nevertheless has advanced many things founded in truth; and almost all that he advances discovers great subtilty of thinking, or elevation of genius. It is even to this day doubtful whether he designed to teach the arts of tyranny, or to put men upon their guard against those arts. The troubles in England, and the death of Charles I. gave rise to many works on the rights of the prince and the people: those of Milton and Saumaïse may be read with profit and delight. Among those who have treated of civil government in general, we may mention Buchanan, Bucherius, Raynoldus, Mariana, Santa-



rellus, Scribonius, Locke, and the author who assumes the name of Junius Brutus. Yet scarce any of these have made so great a figure as the celebrated work entitled *The spirit of laws*, written by the great Montesquieu. Although the principles upon which this work is founded may be controverted, and the erudition with which it is supported may be criticised, yet through the whole there reigns so much precision and force of thinking, that it stands unrivalled among works of this nature.

#### *The* CONCLUSION.

THUS we have taken a cursory view of the history of philosophy from the beginning to the present time. We see men from the first a prey to error and delusion, and rather hurried on by prejudice in the pursuit of truth than calmly conducted by reason. And even now, after the experience of so many ages, we see a taste for paradoxes prevail, and many opinions hazarded unworthy of the times of obscurity. The name of philosopher, indeed, is sufficiently common; but it is arrogated too often without desert, and even atheists and infidels think that they lay their claims with justice. Scepticism also gains ground amongst us: we now seem more ready to undermine established opinions than to build up any new. This philosophy at present too often endeavours to subvert those doctrines on which depends the repose of society; and persons

of good sense begin to impute these disorders to learning, which should be ascribed only to vanity. However, a steady adherence to reason and its dictates will be sufficient to secure us from these errors. We are not to renounce the sciences, as the citizen of Geneva advises, in order to secure us from vice; we have only to follow them with caution: learning may encrease the folly of fools, but it ever promotes the virtues of the good. In short, if we pursue reason and leave imagination, we shall then embody our thoughts and fix our opinions upon solid principles.

BUT indifferent as the present state of philosophy may be with us, yet if we look towards other parts of the world we shall find it deplorable: they seem to be involved in a darkness which nothing can dispel. Even China itself, which has so long enjoyed a large share of science, seems obstinately bent against all new improvements.

THE Chinese philosophy seems comprised in four different periods. The first begins with the founding of their empire by Fohi, and only offers fictions and obscurities. Fohi undoubtedly imitated the arts of all those who have attempted to bring their countrymen from native barbarity. He gave them such instructions as they were susceptible of; and in particular he attempted to establish a religion amongst them, by proposing the heavens and the earth for the objects of their adoration. This early doctrine received many additions in the sequel, par-

ticularly with regard to morals, in which the Chinese have made a very great progress. The works in which these improvements are contained form a collection of classic books. There is one of these volumes called the Pentateuch, and another the Tetrateuch. The second period of their philosophy begins with the celebrated philosopher Confucius, whose name is held in the greatest reverence in China. They even pay his memory a kind of adoration, which part of the missionaries to that country are obliged to allow, while another part prohibits; and this has produced a dissent among them as yet undecided. The philosophers Cheucu and Chinici have given birth to the third period, by establishing a system of morals in some measure resembling that of the Stoics. As to the last period, we may date it from the first arrival of the European missionaries in China, of which we may see more in the account of that empire given us by Du Halde.

THE vast Turkish empire seems quite ignorant of the former glories of the country in which they live: the spirit of their religion in some measure prevents their improvement in the arts of reason. However, perhaps a day may come, in which, like their Russian neighbours, they may shake off their native ignorance, and improve in the arts of politeness.

THE Persians are remarkable for their learning and wit. There are still some doctors amongst them called *Sufy*, who preserve the ancient system of e-

manations; but their philosophy is far from being complete or satisfactory.

THE Tartars have their priests called *Lamas*, at the head of whom is placed a sovereign pontiff, or grand lama. They pretend that their chief never dies, and they talk of Foë as arisen from the dead. This Foë was an impostor, who propagated his detestible principles throughout Asia, principles equally idolatrous and absurd.

WE hear also of a very celebrated personage among the Indians, named Buddas, whose authority is highly respected by the natives of those idolatrous regions. In Siam he goes by the name of Sommona Codam; in China by that of Xaca or Xekia, and in Japan he is called Sotoque. The priests of all these nations tell of numberless miracles wrought by this pretended divinity. In examining into the history of this impostor, it would seem that he was not originally of the Indies, but had come by sea from Ceylon to Siam, and was a native of Lybia, and skilled in the philosophy of the Egyptians. Upon his arrival in the Indies, in imitation of Hermes, he erected himself into a legislator; and, having established universities in the manner of those in Egypt, he introduced the double method of instruction, namely the Esoteric and Exoteric. The former, being hieroglyphical, contributed still more to the encrease of Idolatry. His principles of philosophy were founded upon the system of emanations. He admitted a vacuum, supposed the soul to consist of



a pure substance, exempt from all qualities whatsoever; and asserted that it was the part of a wise man to endeavour to make the actions of his body resemble those of the soul. This doctrine was embraced by numberless sects all over Asia, the most distinguished of which were the Maoliac and Samo.

IN this general picture also we are not to omit the Bramins, who are at once the priests and philosophers of Malabar. Their wisdom is contained in a mysterious book entitled the *Vedam*. As to their philosophy, they profess a kind of enthusiastic quietism, which exhorts men to resemble the divinity in his exemption from inquietude. According to their tenets in general, the supreme Being is incomprehensible, and therefor not to be adored; but there are numberless emanations proceeding from him, some of which are the proper objects of worship. There are also a certain number of male and female virtues, which are employed in the work of creation. Three principal idols serve to represent the divinity, Birum, Isuren, and Wistnow. This philosophy seems founded on atheism.

THE Japanese have a great affinity to the Chinese, and are of the sect of Xekia, which is also subdivided among them into three distinct sects, the Sindoists, the Budsoists, and the Sindosivists. But it is unnecessary to dilate upon their opinions, which can offer to the reader nothing but the deplorable errors of the imagination. Yet God hath his de-

signs in thus permitting their idolatries; what they are is not permitted us to investigate. It is sufficient that we should praise and thank him for having distinguished us with a more ample portion of divine knowledge, and that, while he gives us the most holy religion, he gives us also the most extensive share of reason to support it.

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